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ABSTRACT

The cultural nature of the concept of the child in American early childhood education from 1880 to the present was examined. Chapters 1 through 10 consider the following concepts: (1) the child as a theoretical construction in a review of the literature; (2) the exaltation of childhood by Froebel and the American Froebelians; (3) the savage child in works from G. S. Hall to A. L. Gesell; (4) the spiritual child in Montessori's work; (5) the poor child in the philanthropic movement and in the Great Society; (6) the experimental child in the works of Thorndike, Watson, and Skinner; (7) the pragmatic child in Dewey; (8) the psychological child of the psychoanalytic tradition; (9) the cognitive child in J. M. Baldwin, Piaget, and Vygotsky; and (10) the eclectic view of the child and its reflection in early childhood education. It was concluded that the nature of the child has frequently and radically been redefined in the period under consideration. Furthermore, no linear development, continuity, or interrelatedness among or between the major conceptualizations of the child exists. Finally, no dominant consensus on the nature of the child based on a unitary theory exists at the present time. (RH)

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THE CHANGING PERCEPTIONS OF THE NATURE
OF THE CHILD IN THE CONTEXT OF
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

BY

DORA HALPERIN

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N O V A U N I V E R S I T Y

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The Changing Perceptions of the Nature of the Child
in the Context of Early Childhood Education

by

Dora Halperin

Cluster IX

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in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
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To my Parents
In Memoriam

"Every important advance or reform in the history of education has been in large measure due to new insights into the nature of childhood."

G. S. Hall, 1885

"Who'll show a child just as he is? Who'll set him in his constellation and put the measure of distance in his hand?"

R. M. Rilke, 1922

"There are in our world many phenomena which tax or defy our understanding, the phenomenon of childhood having high priority among them."

Anna Freud, 1970

"Certainty we have to give up, understanding we must not."

William Kessen, 1983

"Maybe we've been on the wrong train. Goethe had an intuition that something was going wrong, that science should not be separated from poetry and imagination. Blake also. Maybe we are going to return to a very rich era when poetry and imagination are once again alongside science."

Czeslaw Milosz, 1986

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The Changing Perceptions of the Nature of the Child in the
Context of Early Childhood Education

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the cultural nature of the concept of the child in relationship to American early childhood education during the period from 1880 to the present. During this period, the notion of the young child experienced rapid and dramatic changes. Each major ideological contribution to the practice of early childhood education was analyzed focusing on the definition of the child and the function and nature of childhood. This analysis was undertaken as a contribution toward improving the humane profession of caring and educating the youngest of our children.

The study consisted in the close reading of representative philosophical, psychological, and educational works from Froebel to Vygotsky. The reception of the original ideas by American early childhood educators was studied through their contributions to the educational literature of the day.

The study concluded that (1) the nature of the child has experienced frequent and radical re-definitions in the psycho-pedagogical literature of the period under consideration; (2) there is no linear development, continuity, or interrelatedness among or between the major conceptualizations of the child; (3) no dominant consensus on the nature of the child based on a unitary theory exists at the present time.

PREFACE

This study has been undertaken with the purpose of examining the changing conceptions of the child underlying the theories of American early childhood education in the past century. Although most educators of young children have a historic knowledge of the origin and vicissitudes of such theories, the vast disparities in the description of the child usually escape the practitioner's notice. The rational and lucid exercise of the complex, vital, and humane profession of caring and educating the youngest of our children, requires both the knowledge of educational theory and an awareness of the implied or explicit assumptions about the nature of the child. This acquires a special urgency now because "the commitment to the special, even unique, importance of the child's encounters during the infantile years-a commitment old and almost universal- is under such serious attack these days we can wonder if it will survive the decade" (Kessen, 1983b, p.31).

The relationship between teachers' feelings and attitudes about children and childhood and actual classroom behavior has been the object of considerable educational research (Wood, 1985). This study has been envisioned as a contribution to the teachers' own efforts to formulate,

elaborate, and clarify their assumptions and beliefs about the children for whom they care.

The historical period extending from the late 19th century to our days has been chosen because it represents, approximately, the duration of the uninterrupted practice of group care and education of young children in the United States, a tradition of which we, today's childcare workers, are heirs and participants. It has been a time during which dramatically different conceptions of the child competed with each other, sometimes coexisted with minor influence, or appeared in seemingly splendid isolation, only to become the dominant idea decades later.

The peculiar nature of early childhood education, a hybrid of psychological theory and a conglomerate of other factors, practical, political, and philosophical, resulted in the survival of bits and pieces of old theories, often embedded in currently sanctioned ideas. It might be even speculated that the richness and aliveness of many of our best programs for children derive precisely from their ability to delve, knowingly or not, into the rich archeological layers of a century of interest and concern for the very young. On the other hand, however, the lack of a theoretical awareness of the nature of our assumptions may result in an aggregate of incompatible practices and expectations. At a time in which full-time day care is fast

becoming the prevalent mode of rearing children in America, the texture and quality of their institutional experience has become of crucial importance.

Abundant quotations are provided throughout this study, even at the risk of tiring the reader, in order to allow the authors speak for themselves, a usual practice in literary analysis although not as common in educational studies. I believe that the proponents of new ideas chose their expressions carefully in order to convey the exact character of their theories; paraphrasing often only obscures and distorts. I have also emphasized what is new, without, I hope, totally neglecting the links to the past. I have tried to avoid facile analogies, often made to underscore the ideological continuity of the early childhood education tradition. While it is evident that a certain continuity exist, determined mainly by the exigencies of the common activity, the discontinuities are striking. The history of the conceptualization of the child cannot be fitted into a model of orderly development: the ideas about the child form, like evolution, "a copiously branching bush, not an unilinear progressive sequence," to borrow a metaphor from S. J. Gould (1981, p.318).

The coexistence of dissimilar views of the child, some of them contradictory, some unrelated, seemed

characteristic of America beginning around mid- 19th century. However, too little is known about how children were viewed in the past to conclude that this is a recent phenomenon; it is possible that a similar complexity, with varying definitions tied to varying social and cultural conditions, had been characteristic of different historical periods. This field of inquiry is still vast and unexplored.

Although this study reviews a seemingly vast ideological landscape, the reader needs to be aware of its narrow limits. All ideas revisited belong to the tradition of Western thought during a relatively short period of history. But even there, the study has touched only a few of the most influential thinkers. The child theorized in this context is invariably white, almost always male even when the actual child observed is female, and with few exceptions, middle-class. It is important, then, that teachers of young children study in addition the rich variety of conceptualizations tied to different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds in order to gain an informed and humanistic perspective.

The frequent use of the male pronoun in reference to the child was, regrettably, almost unavoidable, especially in the earlier chapters, due to the historical nature of the

quotations. Rhetorically and in a theoretical context, the use of male or neuter pronoun was intended to refer to the generic child; it is difficult to ascertain to what degree it also specifically implied the male to the exclusion of the female. Fortunately, the modern use of both pronouns in psychological and educational writing has contributed to dispel this ambiguity.

CHAPTER I
THE CHILD AS A THEORETICAL CONSTRUCTION
A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Since Philippe Aries (1962) published Centuries of Childhood there has been a growing interest in the study of the changing perceptions of childhood. This chapter will present a survey of the most significant work conducted in this area. The relativization of the definition of the child is an important issue in the context of early childhood education. An awareness of the multiple and immensely varied conceptualizations of children's nature is a necessary element for the understanding of educational theory and practice. The overview of recent research will serve as an introduction to a more specific examination of those definitions of the child that determined the educational reality of the young American child during the last one hundred years.

It is impossible to approach the subject of childhood without mentioning Aries (1962). He stated boldly that the discovery of childhood as a distinct phase of human life is a recent development in European history. Aries based his findings on the fact that children are either absent or are depicted with adult proportions in medieval art prior to the twelfth century. This suggested to Aries that childhood had neither interest nor reality for early medieval artists.

Aries (1962) adds, "it suggests too that in the realm of real life, and not simply in that of aesthetic transposition, childhood, was a period of transition which passed quickly and which was just as quickly forgotten." (p.34)

The slow rise of the modern idea of the child was painstakingly documented by Aries as inseparably tied to the evolution of the family from a moral and social institution to a sentimental reality. The schooling of the young, which gradually replaced apprenticeship, was in turn, a factor in bringing about the modern idea of the family. By the seventeenth century the child had won a place beside his family. Parents worried about his education, his career, his future. Children became important elements of every day life but they were not yet the pivot of family life. Families were still centers of sociability under the command of the pater familias. It is only when the modern family cuts itself off from the larger social context that all the available energy of the group is expended on children. The idea of the family as a "haven in a heartless world," (Lasch, 1977) is an essential condition for the emergence of the modern idea of the child.

Modern childhood was discovered, or invented as Postman (1982) puts it, not more than two centuries ago. Once the idea attained its centrality, it did not remain constant. The conceptualization of the child, often linked to the study of human nature in general, experienced not

only changes but drastic reformulations. One of the earliest studies of these variations was undertaken from the point of view of literary criticism by Peter Coveney (1957).

Coveney was attracted to the topic by an awareness of "the very immensity of the numbers of books about children in our literature since the end of the eighteenth century" (1957, p.vii). Childhood became a major literary theme with the generation of Blake and Wordsworth. According to Coveney (1957), "the appearance of the child was... simultaneous with the changes in sensibility and thought which came with the end of the eighteenth century" (p ix). In his book, Coveney followed the child from Wordsworth's Prelude to Freud's Essay on Infantile Sexuality, and to Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and D. H. Lawrence. In his Epilogue, Coveney concluded that the child had become a literary symbol of the authors' "concern with the individual humanity of Man in relation to the influences, most often the encroachments, of modern, industrial, urban society upon it" (1957, p.283).

A new approach to the topic, this time from the field of cultural anthropology and the history of art, was undertaken by George Boas (1966). Boas considers what he calls "the cult of childhood" as a strand of the history of cultural primitivism. After an erudite but brief review of

the few examples of children found in classical and patristic literature, Boas turned to the beginnings of the cult of childhood in the skepticism of the 16th century. Boas followed the anti-intellectual line of late Renaissance thought to the true origins of a radical appraisal of childhood in Rousseau's Emile. During the 17th century, Boas found some examples of the young child as a close copy of Adam before the Fall. The 19th century saw the child as the primitive man, the noble savage. In both cases, growing up is interpreted as a degeneration, a defacement of the original purity.

The idea of the child did not evolve in a straight line of constant progress. The branching off and the taking up of older traditions of thought will be encountered again and again. Boas provided an example of this when he pointed out how the 17th-century image of the child as Adam before the Fall, could be, and was, interpreted as Adam after the Fall. When Calvinism became part of the Puritan tradition, the inherited wickedness, rather than the innocence, of childhood was emphasized. According to Boas, the New England ministers lowered the child down to a position close to Satan, and he quotes John Hersey as saying: "Whatever pain it costs, conquer their stubbornness; break their wills if you would not damn the child" (1966, p.44).

The golden age of the cult of childhood was, for Boas as for Coveney, closely related to the ideology of

Romanticism. Boas analyzed the Romantic highlights in literature, educational thought, and esthetic theory in which the child is held up as the paradigm of man. The fact that psychology and anthropology have their origins here is not a coincidence. In the transformation of Naturphilosophie into Naturwissenschaft, children retained their central importance.

Another perspective on the ideas about children is provided by the historical studies written by developmental psychologists. Bronfenbrenner (1963) pointed to the need for a clear statement about the theoretical conceptions which underlie and animate the research in child psychology. Kessen (1965) provided a basis for such a statement by assembling a collection of texts about children. The passages were selected from Western writers and are largely theoretical. The earliest text chosen by Kessen was written in 1693, the latest in 1942. Kessen arrived at two important conclusions: Firstly, the successive ideas about the child have not led toward a well worked and consistent formal theory. Child psychology has been influenced by medicine, pedagogy, philosophy, and the traditions of child rearing. The result of these multiple influences has been a theoretical diversity, a great variety of conceptualizations which often coexisted during the same historical moment. And secondly, Kessen (1965) asserted, the history of child study is a history of rediscovery:

"The study of child behavior began anew, fresh and enthusiastic, with the birth of Doddy Darwin, Armand Binet, Polly Watson, Helen Baldwin, Jacqueline Piaget, Axel Preyer, and Friedrich Tiedeman. Each father saw his own child--that is the child that his prejudice or theory would predict--but sharing a common object of observation bound these men of divergent times and opinions to a set of common problems about human development" (Kessen, 1965, p.1).

Kessen was particularly interested in the major changes occurring since Darwin published his Descent of Man in 1871. For a few decades the child became the natural laboratory for the study of evolution and the modern idea of "development" was established.

Very soon, however, other influences such as mental testing, behaviorism, and psychoanalysis, changed the child as much as all previous history had; the child became not only fit for redemption and valuable enough to care for, but also meaningful and complex. The history of child study is also a history of a slow accumulation of reliable facts about children, "a history of modest advances toward truth" (Kessen, 1965, p.6).

Kohlberg and Mayer (1972) examined the conceptualizations of children in the context of education as development. Three streams of educational ideology, with their concomitant metaphors, run through the last century and a half, according to these authors. The "romantic" ideology considered what comes from within the child as the most important aspect of development; children were valued

because they possessed an inner self. In addition, by taking the child's point of view, the adult could trace the origins of the self, and experience in this way the otherwise inaccessible elements of goodness, truth, and reality. Rousseau, G. S. Hall, Gesell, and Freud stand in this tradition.

Cultural transmission is the second educational ideology examined by Kohlberg and Mayer. While "the plant" was the romantic metaphor, this tradition was best expressed by the image of "the machine." The important names were Locke, Thorndike, and Skinner. The third stream was represented by the cognitive-developmental psychology of Jean Piaget. Here, the child was not seen as a plant or a machine but as a philosopher and a scientist-poet. Kohlberg and Mayer concluded that pedagogical innovators develop an ideology, with epistemological and ethical assumptions, because the complexities of educational practice cannot be derived from psychological theory or science alone.

In the late 1970s, several works about children and families expressed a feeling that social and economic factors were changing, and even eroding, the ecology of childhood. Keniston (1977) took a carefully documented look at the social context in which children, and parents, live. His caring and incisive study was aimed at the destruction of the myth of the self-sufficient family, independent and

able to protect the well-being and innocence of a new generation. What emerged from Keniston's work was the picture of a relatively powerless family confronted with social and political forces seemingly beyond their control. The professed dedication to the family has not been reflected in American public policy. Keniston concluded that nothing less than a complete redefinition of the social context is needed to insure the survival of childhood.

Christopher Lasch (1977) focused on the changing reality of the family and its impact on the landscape of childhood. The close ties that exist among and between the conceptualizations of the family, women, and children, and the effects of new views were examined in their ideological and historical context. The conclusion was as radical as the one arrived at by Keniston (1977): "Americans can preserve what is valuable in their culture only by changing the conditions of public life itself. Whether they have the energy and imagination to undertake such changes remains to be seen" (Lasch, 1977, p.xxiv).

A Marxist view of the concept of childhood is presented by Hoyles (1979) who stated that

"childhood is a concept both relative and specific: specific, because the concept has specific origins in society and history; relative because childhood has not stood still, socially or historically. Childhood may appear simply a biological, age-specific episode -something which 'does not last'. But beyond appearance, the deeper contradictions arise: those of institutional education, work, class, sex, and race, which certainly outlast childhood." (p.i)

In 1979, Hoyles published a compilation of texts on childhood all of which looked at the phenomenon in its historical and political context. Whereas Aries linked the origin of childhood to the rise of public education, the contributors to this volume emphasized the social context: "The invention of childhood as a separate state corresponds with the transition from feudalism to capitalism. The first children were middle-class and male" (Hoyles, 1979, p.3). It could be argued that it remained that way for several centuries.

Kessen returned to the problem of "the unstable portrait of the child" in 1979. Addressing his fellow child psychologists he shattered the positivistic dream when he affirmed that "we have not yet found the underlying structural simplicities that will reveal the child entire, that we have not yet cut nature at the joints." He proposed the view "that the child is essentially and eternally a cultural invention and that the variety of the child's definition is not the removable error of an incomplete science" (Kessen, 1979/1983a, p.262). This view implied the end of the debates about the fundamental nature of the child. An examination of the sources of the diversity as well as of the many shared beliefs will prove to be, Kessen hoped, far more revealing and more productive. An awareness of "the child as an epigenetic and continuous creation of social and biological contexts" places greater demands not only on the child psychologist but also on those who educate and care

for the child. Education, like child psychology, "is itself a peculiar cultural invention that moves with the tidal sweeps of the larger culture in ways that we understand at best dimly and often ignore" (p.262).

The arguments set forth by Kessen in 1979 inspired the Fourth Houston Symposium held in 1981 under the general title of "The Child and Other Cultural Inventions." Developmental psychology has accepted the challenge to its traditional positivistic methods and was discussed here in terms of its historical situation. A historical psychology will seek to understand its place and function in time. In this sense, White (1983) saw psychology emerging around the turn of the century as an essential meaning-making system for significant new activities in modern societies. Freud, Darwin, and Marx provided powerful and influential cosmogonies, no less usable to society today than myth was in earlier times.

Different psychologists have invented different children. The resulting diversity runs against the unspoken conviction that "a real child, susceptible to discovery, lies behind all the surface variation, the core proposition undergirding developmental psychology" (Kessen, 1983b, p.28). Furthermore, different human cultures have invented different children. The variety of the child across history and across cultures is prodigious. In America, according to

Kessen (1983b), attitudes toward children and their definitions have changed more over time than in most cultures.

American developmental psychology, however, has for years ignored this variety. It has based its research on the belief of the child as individual and self-contained. This pervasive and entrenched assumption needs to yield. Although the idea of the child as a social construction had been put forward by G. H. Mead, J. M. Baldwin, and L. S. Vygotsky, the individualistic approach to child development is so deeply rooted in American life, that a social interpretation seems uncongenial to the spirit of American culture and American child psychology (Kessen, 1983b).

A social and cultural perspective refines the notion of the child to a greater degree than a static study of "the" child. Not only will notions vary historically and culturally, but several different definitions may coexist in one concrete child. Rita Liljestrom (1983) discussed the conflicting conceptions of the modern child in Sweden where she saw the images of a public child and a commercial child compete with that of "our child." The ideological abstractions that are used to formulate public policy differ fundamentally from the unscrupulous mass media culture whose ready made experiences replace the spontaneous activities of childhood. Nevertheless the public and commercial notions tend to overpower that of the private child. It is in the

awareness of these processes that subtle differentiations in conceptualization become important for parents and educators.

It now appears that in the last few years, developmental psychology has taken to heart the need to examine its historical origins and philosophical implication. Lerner (1983) edited a volume of papers dedicated to examine both the ubiquitous role of philosophy in developmental psychology and the ways in which pre-empirical beliefs influence empirical ones. In turn, the studies also demonstrated the fact of how difficult it is for empirical findings to influence implicit assumptions. This work provides an important insight for educators, who, although aware of the scientific findings which theoretically determine educational practice, often neglect the ideological basis that creates the educational reality for the child.

Jerome Kagan (1983) has been aware of the methodological difficulties involved in the study of human nature given the potential distortion that human perception and presupposition may impose on real events. He stated that "the influence of traditional assumptions on codification of the events of psychological development is more obvious and, occasionally, more resistant to change because almost every citizen has some a priori conception of human nature" (p.30). In order to avoid these ideological pitfalls, Kagan based his own studies of developmental issues on a thorough

examination of the philosophical assumptions which historically determined the topic under consideration. In Infancy: Its Place in Human Development (Kagan, Kearsley, & Zelazo, 1978) he examined the "unquestioned assumptions about the nature of man and the goals of development" (p.9). Kagan uncovered those that are so widely held in contemporary Western society as to not require commentary or defense. Kagan (1984) himself only became aware of these "favorite myths about the child" in the course of his cross-cultural studies of infants and children.

The existence of presuppositions is an unavoidable fact of all scientific endeavors. It is necessary, however, to understand their function and build "a conceptual edifice to which fealty can be given and from which ideas for experiments can be easily drawn" (Kagan et al., 1978, p.50). Only so can the psychologist decide which aspects of development are significant and which are trivial. Kagan (1978) observed that we often use the child "as the elite use the peasant, to define ourselves" (p.15). A conceptual basis would provide the detachment needed to understand the human child.

More recently, Kagan has pursued the belief in connectivity, the idea that early experience has a profound effect on all later development, an issue that he considers central in the investigation of development. In a 1983 article, he returned to 19th- and 20th-century theory to

examine the nontrivial biases that the belief in connectivity imposed on what is observed and described.

In The Nature of the Child (1984), Kagan challenged connectivity and other suppositions and proposed his own image of the child. Current scholarship is presented in its historical and philosophical context. Kagan's own view of the child questioned such popular idealistic assumptions as the importance of maternal love, early experience, and the developmental function of inherent characteristic versus surrounding environmental forces. What emerged was the image of a resilient child, liberated from his own past, growing up in a network of experiences and relationships, in a context in which time and maturation are important dimensions. Kagan's major contribution to the topic of the present study is his lucid discussion of the cultural determinants of the conceptualizations of the child.

A sociological approach to the unresolved issue of childhood is represented by Jenks (1982). The realization that children have not been incorporated into the mainstream of sociological theory impelled Jenks to prepare and publish a collection of articles which expressed a variety of theories of childhood. Jenks pointed out that much that is said about children is not really about children at all. Rather, the child in the social sciences is often employed as a device to propound versions of social cohesion. Most

theories, in one way or another, welcome the child to the social group and "invite him to cast off the quality that ensures his difference" while encouraging him to adopt the preponderant values of the dominant culture. And Jenks (1982) added that "for the anthropologist to proceed from such a position would be for him to invite the charge of ethnocentrism" (p.13). But then, as Cole (1983) observed, anthropology discussed a century ago the issues that are faced today in the study of children and childhood.

A sense of the imminent disappearance of childhood has given rise to several books on the nature and cause of such a phenomenon (Elkind, 1981; Polakow-Suransky, 1982; Postman, 1982; Winn, 1984). A similar concern caused Sommerville (1982) to study the history of childhood. In The Rise and Fall of Childhood, he approached the topic from an eclectic angle in which economic and psychological factors coexist uneasily. The broad geographic and historic sweep resulted in many generalizations that seem unfounded. Sommerville acknowledged a certain loyalty to the school of psychohistory. This controversial view considers history a record of private rather than public events. Lloyd de Mause, the founder of psychohistory, stated that "where historians usually look to the sandbox battles of yesterday for the causes of those today, we instead ask how each generation of parents and children creates those issues which are later acted out in the arena of public life"

(1974, p.1). Although childhood became the central focus of attention of psychogenic history, its generalizing methods arrived only at vague definitions of the child.

However, the positive contribution of psychohistory has been the encouragement of studies about the historical perception of children. Important examples of this work were presented by Finkelstein (1979) in her edition of collected papers on the history of childhood under the title Regulated Children/ Liberated Children. Various contributors, several not psychohistorians themselves, examined different notions about children in the context of educational theory, Romantic literature, and popular iconography, in an effort to incorporate an awareness of children into the understanding of modern educational history.

A critical contribution to the history of childhood has been provided by Pollock (1983). Based on strong documented evidence, Pollock's work aimed at dispelling the errors and distortions that lie at the roots of the "Black Legend" of childhood. Her thesis maintained that "both childhood and adolescence were recognised in previous centuries, although children may not have been viewed in the same way as children today" (p.1). By concentrating her research on testimonies of parent-child interactions, Pollock was able to show remarkable continuities in adult attitudes toward children. She also took issue with the idea that there was no appreciation for the needs of

children in the past and thus they were neglected and even ill-treated. This examination of the spontaneous, non-theoretical ideas about children offered another dimension, mostly still unexplored, to the historical reality experienced by children. But the question of the relationship between theory and natural ideas and their relative influence on childrearing practices remains unanswered. A study of universal interactions and basic properties tends to obscure, by its very design, the concrete variations which constitute the child as a social and historical being (Wartofsky, 1983).

It is not surprising that cultural anthropology would also have a contribution to make to the topic under consideration. After considering the biological commonalities of human society, of growth, of parent-child relationships, of needs and fears, Margaret Mead (Mead & Wolfenstein, 1955) proposed a cultural view of childhood. The articles included in the volume she edited in 1955 are all

"studies of pattern, of the stylistic interrelationships of different aspects of childhood, of the way in which, in a given culture, the image of the child, the way the child is rewarded and punished, children's toys, the literature written about children, the selective memories of adults about their childhood, the games the children play, their fears and fantasies, hopes and daydreams, and behavior on projective tests are all systematically related to each other" (p.13).

An awareness of cross-cultural differences in the conceptualizations of the child is an important step toward an understanding of the complexities involved in such abstractions. On the other hand, an ignorance of these ambiguities support the widely held practice of turning every new theoretical finding into practical application. Wolfenstein (Mead & Wolfenstein, 1955) pointed out that the rapid changes in attitudes toward children which have occurred in the present century have involved an equally quick forgetting of rejected beliefs and practices. She believed that "an awareness of past trends in child rearing in our own culture is a prerequisite to the working through to real conviction of reasoned preferences, a potential safeguard against oscillation and inconsistency" (p.445).

The anthropologists' exhortations were heeded by Cable (1972) who wrote a history of child rearing in America. Through books and other materials written for children, and through diaries and memoirs, Cable studied American childhoods from Puritan New England to the nursery schools of the 1950s and came to the realization that "as a culture we have not yet learned to like children" (p.190). In the process, she discovered that ever since the first generation, there has been a recurrent belief that American children are somehow different from their European counterparts, and harder to handle too. Cable (1973) concluded that today's children are still different. But now the

problem is generational. In modern Western society, the experience of the young differs so much from that of their parents and grandparents, that elders are unable to provide the kind of firm guidance that comes from certainty.

Based on a similar perception of the ambiguous role of the modern parent, Wishy (1968) looked, several years earlier, at the debate around the child and child nature during the 19th century. Wishy clarified again the notion that the history of childhood is a history of rediscovery. His study showed, for example,

"how deeply the beliefs in "realism" and "experience" in raising the child had already penetrated before [Dewey and Freud]...in fact the story displays a familiar paradox in intellectual history; how notions adopted originally for certain moral purposes become associated eventually with ideals that would have dismayed the champions of those original purposes." (p.ix)

In times of rapid change, parents rarely trust their own experience. They exist in a state of anxiety amidst the debate of experts, and turn to child care manuals for the latest advice. With great erudition and a touch of levity, Christina Hardyment (1983) examined three centuries of good advice to parents. One of the purposes of this book was to alert parents to the fact that the personal opinions of the various authors played an important role in the nature of the advice given in baby-care books. "[Parents] have less need to be anxious about their own views if the "experts" are recognized to be subjective" (p.xiv). But

Hardyment does more than that. Reading old and new manuals, she found that modern views were held in the past and then discarded, that attitudes toward children do not evolve in a linear progressive manner, but rather experience wide pendular swings in mood. Although Hardyment was writing in England, the fact that important child care manuals were read on both sides of the Atlantic, made her book also a valuable source of information for the study of American views about children.

Finally, a most recent contribution about the profound transformation of the understanding of the child was written by Zelizer (1985). This author focused on the changed perception of the economic and sentimental value of children between the 1870s and the 1930s in the United States. Children, Zelizer asserted, once valuable economic assets to their families in rural as well as urban settings, became sacralized and removed from the world of work during the latter part of the 19th century. The useful child became, at once, economically worthless and emotionally priceless. In the process of sacralization, the child was removed from the adults' everyday world and made to occupy a special and separate world regulated by affection and education.

The following chapters will examine the theoretical assumptions, philosophical or otherwise, that determined the

educational reality during the last century in America. Curti (1980) had observed that the turn of the century was a time of an especially lively discussion on the subject of human nature, a time also "of remarkable change in old patterns of living and in outlook as well as of new scientific discoveries" (p. xi). The decades from 1870 to 1930, selected by Zelizer (1985) for her sociological study, will prove to be also of extreme significance in the context of the ideas about the nature of young children and their education.

CHAPTER II
THE EXALTATION OF CHILDHOOD
THE IDEA OF THE CHILD IN FROEBEL AND
THE AMERICAN FROEBELIANS

The education of young children was a matter of great importance to American parents from the earliest times. Moral and practical advice was abundantly provided to generations of parents who shared a common definition of human nature for almost a century and a half. But ideas began to change during the second half of the 18th century and by the early decades of the 19th century a new conception of childhood was emerging. Consequently, it would be a mistake to affirm that the introduction of Froebelian ideas changed the American image of the child. On the contrary, it probably was precisely because Froebel embodied perfectly the new ideas already in formation, that his educational views naturalized so spectacularly in America. Conversely, the delayed introduction of Froebel years after his death, at a time when Europe was already developing a new view of children, meant that the Froebelian ideas were soon attacked, adapted, and finally obliterated, by the pressure of a fundamentally new way of looking at children.

For almost two hundred years, Calvinism provided the definition of the nature of the child in America. Based on

the central ideas of God's absolute power and man's depraved nature, the infant child was seen as already intrinsically limited by a heritage of sin. Such typical childhood behaviors as play, laughter, or stubbornness were interpreted as manifestation of this innate sinfulness.

The Puritan belief in human depravity was accompanied by the notion that the child was born in ignorance. Since this ignorance was interpreted in religious terms, early childhood was considered as Satan's opportunity to lead the child astray. Consequently, in this interpretation of human nature, early education became extremely important as a matter of piety. Israel Loring, for example, admonished parents to "begin betimes to teach your Children. You have the advantage early to teach them, before their young and tender minds receive ill impressions from others" (quoted in Beales, 1979, p.11).

Puritan parents paid close attention to the moral instruction of their children. The goal was to implant in the young an awareness of their corrupt nature. Example and punishment would subject their will to that of God. The memorization of the Scriptures and a question-and-answer drill on doctrinal matters was assumed to produce the understanding necessary for grace to enter the child's soul (Shapiro, 1983).

Although the Calvinist view of the child is well known, critics often mistook the ideological starkness of

the doctrine for the nature of the parents' feelings for their children. Recent studies (Beales, 1979; Hiner, 1979; Pollock, 1983) have examined not only doctrinary manuals but also diaries and letters of Puritan parents in order to ascertain the nature of parent-child relations. A more complex view of Puritan parental attitudes was reflected in these materials than was previously accepted.

Children were not only "stained from birth with Adam's sinful act," they were also a source of joy and delight to their parents. Pollock (1983) observed that "parents took a great deal of interest in their children and experienced much pride with regard to their behaviour and achievements--children were indeed hopes for the future" (p.102). In spite of the high mortality, a fact often mentioned to explain a presumed lack of attachment, parents grieved deeply for the death of each individual child. They found solace only in the knowledge that their child was in heaven and in this context, they often expressed a belief in childhood's innocence. In short, the Puritan view of the child was best contained in the ambivalent image of Adam. The child could be seen as the innocent first man still inhabiting the gardens of Paradise, a frequent metaphor in 17th-century English literature, or, conversely, as the corrupt exile after the Fall, a characterization the child shared with humankind in general.

When Lockean psychology gained popularity in America about 1750, there was contained in it the foundations for a new idea of the child. Cotton Mather had considerable difficulties in accepting Locke's sensationalism which rejected the notion of innate ideas. For Mather, it meant the negation of Reason "a Faculty formed by God in the Mind of Man" (Curti, 1980). But, as Shapiro (1983) has pointed out, other American parents and educators interpreted Locke as an ally of Calvinism. Without accepting the new idea of the mind as a blank page, neither evil nor good, and the concept of the plasticity of the early years, they welcomed Locke's advice to begin at an early age the rigorous rational education of children.

Thus, the Calvinist view of the child proved to be a lasting influence in the United States. Wishy (1968) noted that even at the time of the triumph of American independence, a resurgence of Calvinism resulted in the attack of the slowly emerging Enlightenment notion of the child as an inherently pure being who deserved happiness. The transition to a more cheerful view of the child happened gradually through the moral advice of Evangelical Protestant writers. They rejected the innateness of evil and the predestination of salvation. Around 1830, the child redeemable emerged based on the idea of the perfectibility of the individual.

As Kessen (1965) has aptly pointed out, Locke emptied out the child freeing him from the essential tendency of

sin. But children were still conceptualized as incomplete adults who required the work of teachers to bring them through the plain of childhood: "For many thinkers of Locke's time, the plain was infested with snarling animals and dangerous pits -the temptation of Satan and the perversity of man. Locke cleared the plain, leaving a theoretical empty child and his Rational tutor" (p.73). By the 1820s, the doctrine of infant depravity was no longer generally acceptable. It had been dropped even from doctrinary theory:

"I ask...if children were demons fit for hell, would God have given them that attractive sweetness, that mild beauty which renders them the most interesting objects on earth, and which compels us to shrink with horror from the thought of their everlasting ruin." (from Dissertation on the Sinfulness of Infants, 1814, quoted in Hardyment, 1983, p.77)

However, a complete rejection of the belief in depravity did not become popular until the 1850s. Children were now considered inclined to evil rather than inherently corrupt. It fell to the parents "to weed out" sin and wickedness while they were still weak in the young child. The goal still was to prepare the child for salvation but the methods became relatively benign and enlightened. The parent, especially the mother, assumed the role of the child's Lockean tutor.

Several ways of looking at children coexisted during the years from about 1830 to the early 1870s. A new

sentimentality, associated with an emphasis on domesticity, began to influence the way children were understood. Lydia Sigourney became immensely popular not only in America, but also in England through the publication of a religious magazine for mothers in which she combined emotion-filled descriptions of infants with stern exhortations to religious education. Hardyment (1983) quoted the following from Sigourney's writings: "Mothers, if there is one grave in the churchyard shorter than your child, hasten to instruct him in religion" (p.42).

The father was no longer responsible for the moral education of his children as he had been in earlier times. It was now the mother's duty to teach virtuous habits by precept and by example. The importance of this duty was underscored time and time again in the child care literature. It was believed that children left to themselves would be the prey of evil. Therefore obedience was the central virtue, but parents, like God, were expected to demand obedience through love rather than fear.

More strictly orthodox writers like Horace Bushnell and Thomas Gallaudet preached early and strict religious education and observances. Constant themes considered fit for children, were early church-going, the beauty of death, solemn Sabbaths, and frequent prayer (Wishy, 1968). The nature of the child did not need devastation, according to

the orthodox writers, but it was still in need of amelioration. It was the parents' duty to provide the appropriate spiritual guidance, for, it was believed, they would be judged by the conduct of their children.

At the same time, while the sentimental and the strictly evangelical views were replacing the Calvinist conceptualization of the child, Transcendentalism was formulating a Platonic definition of human nature which cross-fertilized with the literature of European Romanticism to produce an exalted idea of the child. A fundamental force in Transcendentalism was the religious trend most vividly illustrated by Unitarianism, led in the United States by William Ellery Channing.

Unitarianism first appeared as a protest against objectionable doctrines of the early 19th-century orthodoxies, particularly as found in Calvinism. As the name indicates, the central item in dispute was the doctrine of Trinity, which the Unitarians considered incompatible with the unity of God. But they were equally concerned to protest against such doctrines as original sin, total human depravity, infant damnation, the wrath of God, and predestination. Christian teachings ought instead to emphasize the moral perfection, the mercy of God, the goodness of man, and the demand for true holiness of Christian living

(Dillenger & Welch, 1954). The new thought focused less on piety and supernatural grace, and more on moralism and human activity. The virtual coincidence of Transcendentalism and Unitarianism was expressed by Channing's nephew, William Henry Channing when he wrote that

"Transcendentalism ... was a pilgrimage from the idolatrous world of creed and rituals to the temple of the living God in the soul ... Amidst materialism, zealots, and skeptics, the Transcendentalists believed in perpetual inspiration, the miraculous power of the will, and a birthright to the universal good" (quoted in Snyder, 1972, p.35).

The resulting view was that every human being was endowed with divine gifts and intuitions, a notion that fostered not only ideas of equality among men but also a revaluing of the nature of woman and, especially, of children.

Unitarianism looked at education as a way of maximizing the innate spiritual gifts; its influence on American education cannot be overstated. The necessary corollary of the enthusiastic belief in the importance of natural order and the value of each child was the establishment of public education as a right of all children. It also infused education with a religious zeal and a messianic mission, attitudes that also characterized many American Froebeli-ans.

Elizabeth Peabody, considered the founder of the first Froebelian kindergarten in America, seemed to personify in herself and her circle of acquaintances all the

elements that determined the new conceptualization of the child. Her mother, a teacher herself, implemented the belief in the spiritual nature of the child not only in the way she raised her children but also in a school she ran for years in New England. Elizabeth herself worked as an assistant at Bronson Alcott's Temple School in Boston. She studied Greek and philosophy with Ralph Waldo Emerson, was a friend and correspondent of William Ellery Channing, the Unitarian leader, and of the Transcendentalist artist Washington Allston. Her sister Mary married Horace Mann and her sister Sophia married Nathaniel Hawthorne.

Peabody was greatly influenced by the ideas and educational practice of Bronson Alcott. Alcott had combined philosophical readings with the study of the educational writings of Pestalozzi. To this he added the insights gleaned from the observation of children during his years as a Connecticut schoolteacher. Alcott considered children as the image of God, "our nature yet despoiled of none of its Glory" (quoted in Plotz, 1979, p.67), and came to the controversial conclusion that they possessed certain spontaneous spiritual truths which, given adequate education will unfold gradually in a harmonious sequence.

Very appropriately, Alcott's definition of Transcendentalism was that "it means that there is something in the mind which did not get there through the senses" (quoted in Blow, 1899, p.3). This notion was gaining in acceptance at

the time and its educational application was not entirely new. Later in the century, Elizabeth Peabody (1882) remarked: "It seems to me that the self-activity of the mind was cultivated by my mother's method in her school. If not so much was poured in--or rather on--more was brought out" (p.741). Alcott's method to bring out the inner was through conversations with children in which, he hoped, the spiritual good would be released while evil would be restrained. In spite of the favorable ideological climate, Alcott's educational experiment failed. Boston was not ready yet for the unrestricted outpourings of children's souls.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, a friend of Alcott, was the principal spokesman of Transcendentalism. In his writings, he reflected the influences of Platonic and neo-Platonic imagery, the poetry of Coleridge and Wordsworth, the works of Goethe, and the religious ideas of the Swedish mystic Emanuel Swedenborg. According to Boas (1966), Emerson contributed significantly to the cult of childhood. In his prose lyric Nature (1836/1957), Emerson provided a compendium of Romantic idealism, the ideological basis for the exaltation of the child.

When his son Waldo was born in 1836, he was received, in accordance to the Romantic theory, as "the perpetual Messiah, which comes into the arms of fallen men, and pleads with them to return to paradise" (1836/1957,

p.72). Emerson called his son "a piece of love and sunshine, well worth my watching from morning to night" (p.124). The child, "too precious and unique a creation to be huddled aside into the waste and prodigality of things" (p.208) and "Nature's sweet marvel undefiled" (p.431), is imbued with an intuitive knowledge of spiritual truths. Of his son he wrote that "calmly and wisely happy, the beautiful Creative power looked out from him and spoke of anything but chaos and interruption; signified strength and unity-- and gladdening, all-uniting life" (p.208). In the poem "Threnody," written after the death of Waldo in 1848, Emerson described the child as possessing a wisdom beyond reason, a prophetic vision, and an "innocence that matched the sky" (p.433).

The influential Transcendentalists were themselves influenced by the ideas and images of Romanticism. Since the revolutionary impact of English and German Romanticism on the idea of the child has been extensively studied (Coveney, 1957; Boas, 1966; Plotz, 1979), its role will receive only a brief mention here. Romanticism originated in part from a need to take into account the human instincts and emotions that had been disregarded by rationalism. In the child, Romantics found a rich and complex symbol for the new cult of feeling, still free from the constraints of custom and intellectualism. As a symbol also for the

creative power of imagination, the child was often compared to the poet and the artist.

Human growth and development was a central theme in Romantic literature closely related to the interpretation of nature as potentiality and life as a becoming. Children, surprisingly arcane and in constant transformation, became a favorite embodiment of the adult hope of realization. Their creativity, spontaneity, and their endless capacity for play were considered to represent the highest level of human nature. Such a conceptualization of the child demanded humility and respect; the adult experienced a reverence for the child who, as the more perfect being, is often represented in the role of the teacher or the father. Only the poet and the artist, among adults, were seen as having been able to retain the original virtues of the child.

William Blake, who was both a poet and an artist, felt a clear affinity with children. He saw in them the spontaneous expression of innate ideas and the true source of artistic creativity. The opposition to Locke's conception of human nature which ran through all his work (Raine, 1979), was expressed, for example, in the criticism of the neo-classical painter Sir Joshua Reynolds. Blake wrote that

"Reynolds Thinks that Man learns all that he knows. I say on the Contrary that Man Brings all that he has or can have Into the World with him. Man is Born like a Garden ready Planted & Sown. This World is too poor to

produce one Seed...Innate Ideas are in every Man, Born with him; they are truly Himself" (1808/1963, p.9).

In his poetry, he frequently expressed the Romantic belief that children have access to a kind of visionary simplicity that is denied to adults (Carpenter, 1985). The child's confrontation with the corrupting world of experience was a major topic of Blake's poetry. The poet saw education as one more way by which adults intrude into the world of the child; "to the venerator of childhood sanctity, the educational process must seem ironic, a forced exchange of a lower for a higher form of wisdom " (Plotz, 1979, p.68). In Blake's words from his poem "The SchoolBoy,"

"How can the bird that is born of joy
Sit in the cage and sing?"

A poet who had a greater influence than Blake on the new formulations on the nature of the child was William Wordsworth. His importance to the 19th-century interest in the child is widely recognized. Kate Douglas Wiggin (1896) called him "the kindergartner's poet" (p.54), and Bowen (1892) liked to illustrate Froebel with quotations from Wordsworth, "partly to show how much alike were the views of these two great prophets of nature; partly to lessen that sense of singularity in Froebel's ideas which seem to daunt young students" (p.70). The increasing interest in studying and observing children was attributed by some to the influence of Wordsworth's idealization of the child

(Coveney, 1957). Others considered that his poetry contributed in preparing the soil for educational reform (Thrusfield, 1945). Degler (1980) mentioned the writings of an American publicist who, in 1841, considered that Wordsworth's Ode alone had made parents aware of the value and merit of their children.

The significance of Wordsworth's poetry resided in the fact that it is intensely philosophic. Coveney (1957) described his attitude toward childhood as resulting from "a serious philosophic purpose of formulating a concept of the moral consciousness based on the relation between Nature and the poetic self" (p.31). In the Ode "Intimations of Immortality from Recollection of Early Childhood", Wordsworth conveyed his awareness of the significance of childhood as the source of his poetic power. In his own words,

"the visionary qualities of children have often been noted, and have been interpreted as intimations of immortality: I took hold of the notion of pre-existence as having sufficient foundation in humanity for authorizing me to make for my purpose the best use of it I could as a poet" (Coveney, 1957, p.38).

The idea that the child's spiritual nature participated before birth in the unity of a divine essence is best expressed in the following lines from "Intimations":

"The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,

And not in utter nakedness,
 But trailing clouds of glory do we come
 From God who is our home:
 Heaven lies about in our infancy.
 Shades of the prison-house begin to close
 Upon the growing Boy"

Thus, for the Romantics, the child represented the most profound region of the self. It is from an unconscious harmony and unity in childhood that development departs toward adulthood, a time when the lost vision can only be regained through memories or through the renewed contemplation of childhood. The child embodies wholeness and self-completion; through his intimate bond with the mother, he is connected to Nature and the world. Growing up means a deterioration, the dissolution of a primordial unity, a gradual exile from paradise (Watson, 1982).

Blake, as the visionary, had foreseen the threat posed to the spiritual life of the individual by industrialization with its necessary regimentation and he had symbolized it in the truncated lives of poor and exploited children. Wordsworth expressed this fear for the survival of the individual in an elegiac tone translated into the sorrow for the loss of the visionary unity of childhood. His glorification of nature and the nostalgic idealization of the child contributed to make his poetry increasingly influential in America in an era of advancing urbanization and utilitarianism.

It is in this context of philosophical ideas, religious innovations, and literary enthusiasm that Froebel's popularity needs to be understood. Americans recognized in him those vital and new ideas about children that were becoming familiar, but expressed in a form ready to be applied to the group education of young children.

When Susan Blow, an important figure in the kindergarten movement, published a translation of The Mottoes and Commentaries of Friedrich Froebel's Mother Play (1899), she considered it necessary to write an Introduction on Froebel's philosophy. It is even more important today, in a less philosophical age, to be aware of the basic tenets of Romantic idealism which form the conceptual structure for Froebel's definition of the child. Blow observed that Kantian thought, so powerful in New England Transcendentalism, "has bent itself to the lowly service of childhood, and, using as its instrument the mind of Froebel, is visibly transforming the nurseries and infant schools of all civilised lands" (1899, p.3).

Kant argued that knowledge, defined as absolute truth, could not be derived from experience which is relative and transitory. Only if the mind contained a priori or innate ideas or categories which structure the experience acquired through the senses, the world could be apprehended. Kant's followers transformed this concept into the identity of the subject and the object of knowledge.

Man and nature became one, constantly developing and evolving toward higher levels of consciousness. Everything in this unity was related to everything else, therefore everything could be interpreted in a symbolic way. A circle of children, for example, became for Froebel a symbol of the universe. Since the mind is born with the categories that permit the cognition of the Absolute, children are able to understand the deeper meanings which lie hidden in everyday things.

Froebel's thought has been called mystical (Lilley, 1967) in part due to the obscurity and complexity of his style and the vividness of his imagery. This characterization implicitly denied Froebel's work the systematic quality of philosophical thought. In support of her assertion, Lilley (1967) mentioned Froebel's reading of the 17th-century Silesian mystic Jakob Boehme and the Romantic poet Novalis. The misinterpretation probably arose from the fact that German Romantic literature, and Froebel himself, made extensive use of the mystical repertory of organic imagery and mathematical metaphors. The term mystical, however, defines a particular mode of experience, reserved to a few individuals under very special circumstances. Froebel, on the other hand, borrowed the vocabulary of mysticism in order to present convincingly his particular understanding of childhood and human development.

In the Romantic conception of dynamic unity, nature was not a separate entity that acquired meaning through the intervention of human thought. Rather, nature was the revelation of Reason for it was seen as the manifestation of God. It followed then, for the Romantics, that God, the Absolute, escaped rational understanding. The Absolute can only be experienced through its manifestations. For Froebel, and other Romantics, the purest manifestation of the divine is the child. Childhood, then, is nothing else but the Revelation of the Father (Giel, 1957).

It requires great imagination, and a suspension of our own beliefs, to understand the meaning such a realization had for a generation still deeply religious. This philosophical framework invested infants and young children with a sacredness of awesome implications for the adults who surrounded them. In its original formulation in Froebel, the conceptualization went far beyond a benign or nostalgic view of the child. Neither did it imply a sentimental or emotional attitude. The idea of the child as Revelation and its antecedent, Jesus as Revelation, resulted in the basic postulate of Froebel's theory: Jesus is born again in every child in a very real sense. The family as the "locus of revelation" acquired its own sacred character. Raising children was considered a ministry. Later, the participants in the kindergarten movement often described themselves as priests of a new religion.

While children were considered to be still in close contact with the divine and able to experience it directly, adults could only experience the divine consciously in their interaction with children. In this way, they return to their own childhood, now able to understand the Absolute rationally, but with the needed guidance of a child. Since return implies departure, Froebel considered middle childhood ("boyhood") as the time when the child became the heir to human free will. It is around the age of six or seven that the child was seen as losing or abandoning the unconscious unity with the Absolute. The child under seven was conceptualized as qualitatively different from the older child and the adult. Therefore, the early education of young children acquired a crucial importance not only for the individual child and his future salvation, as in Calvinism, but also, and to the same degree, for the spiritual growth of the adults who shared the children's life.

Froebel's understanding of childhood was also linked to the Romantic concept of development. For the Romantics, reality and life were in a constant state of flux, of striving, of transformation. Froebel considered that "it is inexpressibly injurious to view development and the cultivation of humanity as stationary, concluded..." (1827/1886,

p.11). Development was seen as a life-long process that involved the total human being, spirit, intellect, will, and emotions.

Everything had a purpose and a goal in the Romantic's universe; the purpose of human self-activity was the achievement of total self-consciousness. This was defined as the capacity of establishing relationships of increasing complexity with the external world in order to apprehend the common essence. This would lead, in turn, to the understanding of God. Froebel defined development as the actualization of the divine essence. But, at the same time, he described the divine essence as possessing an intrinsic energy which drives it to become actualized, thus bearing testimony to the existence of God. Through development, the "inner" which is eternal, becomes manifest in the "outer," which is the relative and transitory reality of the world.

The Romantics considered that the essence of everything was divine; the all encompassing unity assumed to exist in the variety of everyday experience was explained by the common essence shared. Man partakes in this unity and, just as the flower in the garden, he was seen as divine and holy in his essence. But unlike the flower, man is a thinking being, conscious of himself and capable of self-determination. Man's special destiny is "to bring his nature, the divine in him, thus God, and his destiny, his vocation, himself, to complete consciousness, to vivid

recognition, to clear insight, and with self-determination and freedom to practice all this in his own life, to allow it to act, to manifest it" (Froebel, 1827/1886, p.2). Development became a moral imperative. The aim of education was "to raise man to the recognition of himself and of humanity, to the recognition of God and Nature, and to the pure, holy life thereby conditioned" (p.3).

Thus, education and development were coextensive. The ways both proceeded were explained in the closing pages of Froebel's Education of Man: "God does not cram and graft; therefore the human spirit as a divine spirit, must not be crammed. But God develops the smallest and the most incomplete in constantly advancing succession according to eternal laws founded in and developing from themselves" (p.270).

Furthermore, human development was not limited to the individual process. Every human being was considered a part of humanity and was described as intimately connected to the whole throughout time. In consequence,

"parents [should] observe and consider the child in necessary connection, in clear relation, and in vivid reference to the present, past, and future of human development, and so place the cultivation, the education of the child in connection, accord, and harmony with the present, past and future demands of the development of man and the human race,...therefore the child should be observed, considered, and treated as a human being with divine, earthly, and human attributes...at the same time a unity, an individuality, and a manifoldness...bearing within itself, present, past, and future" (Froebel, 1827/1886, p.10).

Development was, for Froebel, a progression from the unconscious to the rational. The process can be described as moving from the harmony and unity of infancy, through the dissociations of youth, to an ideal conscious harmony in maturity. Froebel did not conceive of development as culminating in adulthood; life itself is development and growth. Therefore, there was less of the Wordsworthian idea of inevitable deterioration and loss of Paradise associated with growing up. Froebel did not ignore the struggles and pitfalls of development. In fact, the basic freedom attributed to human nature made them unavoidable: "Man must be able to fail in order to be good and virtuous" (1827/1886, p.72).

The complexities of Froebel's theoretical edifice often interfered with the readers' appreciation of his understanding of real children in their natural environment of home, garden, and fields. It was his talent, however, to be able to see both the abstraction of ideas and the reality of observation in the human child. The intimate blend of objective observation and ideological bias can be observed in his descriptions of infants and children. On the birth of his neighbor's child, Froebel asked "What in reality is the birth of a child? An invisible spiritual being which has an eternal existence makes its appearance. The invisible becomes visible" (1826/1967, p.74). The infant is "a pledge

of love, the nearness, the favor of God" (1827/1886, p.10). But he also observed the strivings and trembling of the limbs, the intensity with which babies focus their eyes, the way they understand their mother's talk;

"could we but regard our children in the first weeks of their life as inherently sensitive and responsive to their environment, how different they and how different mankind would be...A baby may appear helpless but his power of thought is much greater than we imagine" (1826/1967, p.78).

To mothers he pointed out that the child "attracts to himself the influences necessary for his development... more potent than all external stimuli is the child's passionate impulse towards a development of his own inner being" (1843/1899, p.58).

During infancy, the child discovers a sense of self and a sense of community. He will become aware of his power over his caregivers and will attempt to take advantage of it. If the infant's needs are attended to, he will delight his parents "with his laughter, his well-being, his joyfulness..." (1827/1886, p.13). Froebel's familiarity with children is revealed when he recommended that the child had to learn to endure "little, insignificant troubles and... cultivate a power in himself by his own patience, endurance, and action" (p.14).

Froebel's writings abound with practical suggestions. He observed the childrearing practices of his day and

expressed his views in concrete terms in order to help parents with all the aspects of their child's development. He recommended, for example, that the infant should sleep in a bed that is not too soft, "exposed to the influence of the pure air." Babies should never be left without some activity or occupation. To avoid boredom, Froebel suggested, "it is advisable to hang up a cage with a bird in it in the natural line of vision of the child" (1827/1886, p.28).

Childhood developed, according to Froebel, in clearly defined stages : infancy (birth to two), "childhood" (two to six or seven), and "boyhood" (seven to puberty). Infancy was considered as an extremely important stage; it is the time when the external world is apprehended. The baby's mind is "an appropriating eye." All the impressions taken in at this stage will stay with the child throughout his life "just because his whole being was, like a great eye, opened to these impressions and abandoned to them" (1827/1886, p.14-15). In a great affirmation of connectedness, Froebel called the period of earliest childhood "the germ of all later life" (1843/1899, p.62). He told mothers that "the possibility of perfect manhood is what you read in your child's eye, just as the perfect flower is prophesied in the bud, or the giant oak in the tiny acorn" (1843/1899, p.68).

A child emerges from the care of his mother during infancy with

"his soul already full of true active life, of desire for the knowledge of causes and effects, for the understanding of the whole and its ramifications; with his mind open to the truth and his eyes to the light, and with a perpetually nourished yearning for the creative activity, able to observe while building up, and to recognize while taking apart, such in himself and in his surroundings, always active, creative full of thought and endeavor" (1862/1889, p.119).

When infants learn to speak they enter "childhood", Froebel's second stage of development. They are still inseparably a part of their parents. Their speech is intuitive since they have not yet acquired a metalinguistic understanding. Word and thing are one, "every object, every thing becomes such for the child by the word. Before the word was given, the thing had no existence for the child, though his outer eye seemed to perceive it. A word created as it were, the thing for the child" (1827/1886, p.53). The acquisition of language marks the beginning of individuation. For the infant, the world existed only as a formless whole in which he and the objects seemed to float "in chaotic confusion." But as the child grows "the objects came forth out of this void, this mist, especially by the word early interposed by the parent, by the mother, first separating the child from the outer world, then again uniting him with it" (1827/1886, p.25).

The incessant curiosity of the young child, his need to know is, according to Froebel, intimately related to his need to acquire language: "Every thing that enters into his small range of vision, which widens his as yet narrow world, is dear to him. The smallest thing is to him a discovery ...he would like to know all its properties, its innermost nature." (1827/1886, p.40). This innermost nature is, philosophically speaking, expressed by the word. Thus, the child needs the assistance of adults because they are able to provide these verbal tools of understanding: "We need only to designate, to name, to give words to what the child does, seeks, perceives, and finds" (1827/1886, p.41).

Words, however, meant more to Froebel than the ability to speak the native tongue. Froebel accepted the Romantic notion of a natural language; it was assumed that Adam had given to all things an original name according to their essence. Thus, words were not arbitrary social conventions but the necessary reflections of things. In the course of history, human beings presumably have lost the ability to understand the deep relationship that exists between objects and words. Froebel asked: "How can we give language to the objects of the child's life if they are dumb to us?" (1827/1886, p.40). Children, on the other hand, like Adam before the Fall, have an intuitive mode of knowing; "language and Nature lie open before the child" (p.48).

The Romantic appreciation for intuitive, all-inclusive knowledge and wisdom was the source of the reverence for childhood. Froebel considered that all adult knowledge was a product of social convention and, therefore, dead; "almost everything we say is hollow and empty, without meaning and without life." Adults could recuperate "the all-vivifying, all-forming power of child-life" only if they learn the fundamental truths from their children. Froebel urged adults "to give ear to the gentle monitions of their life, the quiet demands of their intellect" (1827/1886, p.52-53).

Froebel's stage of "childhood" is also the time in which the child begins to play. Pebbles and straws are the playthings of the young child and, maybe, "a doll or a cart, a whistle or a sheep, provided only that in and through his toy he finds and represents himself and his little world" (Froebel, 1843/1899, p.266). The importance of play in Froebel's definition of childhood can hardly be overstated. He believed that

"play is the purest, most spiritual, product of man at this stage, and is at once the prefiguration and imitation of the total human life...it produces therefore, joy, freedom, satisfaction, repose within and without, peace with the world...Is it not the most beautiful phenomenon of child-life, the playing child at this period of his life, the child wholly absorbed in his play, the child who has dropped asleep while absorbed in play?" (1827/1886, p.30-31).

The function of play is not trivial or merely pleasurable. As children grow older, play will change from pure activity to representation. The games played with peers will awaken the first sense of community. Later, the games' necessary rules offer children a prefiguration of the laws of adult society. Play is also regarded by Froebel as the source of important moral lessons for the growing child; through play "justice, moderation, self-command, veracity, honesty, brotherliness, and also strict impartiality will spring up like beautiful flowers of the heart, mind, and firm will" (1827/1886, p.68).

While observing children at play, Froebel suspected that "a higher meaning underlies the occupations and games which children choose out for themselves" (1862/1889, p.76). In 1843, he formulated his theory about the symbolism in childhood play in his Mutter-spiel und Koselieder. W. T. Harris, in the Editor's Preface to the American edition (Froebel, 1843/1899), called these songs and games for the mother and her child "the key to the philosophy of the kindergarten and the manual for its practice" (p.vii). This work exerted an immense influence on the kindergarten movement in America and, taken literally, obscured many of the ideas expressed in the Education of Man (1827/1886). In Mother Play (1843/1899), Froebel interpreted in detail the symbolism implicit in objects, games, fingerplays, and every day activities. This work was intended to help mothers

better understand their children: "Through reading the soul of your child, dear mother, you will learn to harmonize the contradictions of his self-revelation with the unity of his essence" (p.54). It was not meant to be prescriptive;

"it is an attempt to aid you [the mother] to recognise in the period of earliest childhood the germ of all later life. It aims to interpret your own instinctive words and deeds, and to help you to a clear consciousness both of what you are trying to do for your child, and of the inner impulse whence your effort proceeds" (p.62-63).

Play often seems childish to adults because its deeper spiritual meaning is incomprehensible for most. Froebel believed that such meanings were revealed to him by the children themselves and had become intelligible to him; therefore he decided to systematize playthings and activities for early childhood education according to their symbolic meaning. He designed a series of educational materials (the Gifts) and games (the Occupations) and organized them in a precise sequence translated into a pedagogic system. Whether he meant to provide a rigid procedure or a simple guide has been a matter of debate for Froebelians and anti-Froebelians for decades. The result was, however, a didactic routine that imposed a paralyzing formalism on young children in complete opposition to the spirit of Froebel's teachings.

In Froebel's view, play was also the young child's way to logico-mathematical knowledge. Froebel observed that

children's thirst for knowledge often went unnoticed by adults who believe that they have to wait for the years of formal schooling to assume the task of instructing the child. He saw how very young children already delight in classifying, seriating, and quantifying. The "capacity for number" satisfies "an essential need of [the child's] inner nature, a certain yearning of his spirit." But, just like in the case of language, the playing child needs parental help in order to understand the concepts which are just "dim anticipations" until the adults provide the tools for understanding. Froebel sounded almost Vygotskian when he stated that "the mother, or the loving, guiding nurse, now only joins to the child's action the explaining word; that is, connects the visible with the audible, and thus brings it nearer to the insight, recognition, and inner perception of the child" (1827/1886, p.45-46). His belief in connectivity also extended to the cognitive area; "where is there an object of future information and future teaching which does not germinate in childhood?" (p.48).

Froebel's child was not only a spiritual being and an indefatigable learner, he was also an active participant in his parents' domestic and business endeavors. An early and real participation in adult life, under the protective eye of the parent, contributed to the child's self-esteem, as Froebel so charmingly demonstrated through examples like the following:

"I look out of doors, and the scarcely two-year old child of a day-laborer is leading his father's horse: the father has placed the bridle in the child's hand. The child moves on quietly and steadily before the horse, and looks round frequently to see if the horse is following. True the father holds the curb-rein in his hand; still the child is firmly convinced that he is leading the horse and that the horse must follow him." (1827/1886,p.48)

Parents are urged to take advantage of their work and utilize it "for the information and teaching of their children" (p.49), since "every business and every trade, every calling of the father affords a starting point for the acquisition of all human knowledge" (p.51).

Froebel's child grew into a loving and compassionate boy. He was neither timid nor rashly adventuresome. He found his sense of self in his interaction with other children. This social element in Froebel's theory gave rise not only to the need for early childhood group education, which he implemented in the kindergarten, but also to the conviction that children needed specially designated places to play, the origin of the playground movement.

The real child was not idealized; he was not always joyful and cooperative. On the contrary, in the older child

"we meet with self-will, defiance, love of ease, spiritual and bodily supineness and indolence, frivolity and self conceit, positiveness and desire to rule, unbrotherliness and unchildlikeness, emptiness and superficiality, aversion to labor and even to play, disobedience and profanity... (p.72).

The cause of these misbehaviors, however, was not located in the nature of the child "for indeed the nature of man is in itself good," but rather in parental neglect, a disregard for the child, "early faulty direction," and the application of wrong educational methods. Very often, according to Froebel, it was "the educator who first makes the child and boy bad" (p.76). Adults provide poor examples and then punish the child for following them; more importantly, adults consider children evil because they believe that "a child cannot carry a heaven in his mind, without previously going to it through guilt" (p.76).

A Romantic understanding of development as an unfolding of the potentialities from within necessarily considers education as permissive in order to allow full freedom for the inner good to develop (Kohlberg & Mayer, 1972). Froebel stated that "[education] must be necessarily passive, watchfully and protectively following, for the effect of the divine is, when undisturbed, necessarily good" (1827/1886, p.5). A harmony of "giving and taking, uniting and separating, dictating and following, acting and enduring, deciding and setting free" (p.9) has to be established between adult and child before true education can take place. Children, according to Froebel, have "a correct discernment" to know if what is required of them is part of

a higher law or an arbitrary decision on the adult's part:
 "the child, the pupil, rarely makes a mistake at this"
 (p.9).

Children, in true Romantic manner, were conceptualized as superior to the adult because they were presumably still in close touch with their original nature, with "the inworking, animating, uniting (intensive) power" (1827/1886, p.84). Nevertheless, the ideal adult, who cultivated first the godlike in himself knowing that all earthly knowledge will follow, could, according to Froebel, also become again "perfect like our Father in Heaven" (p.84).

Froebel was well aware of the ideas that preceded the Romantic exaltation of childhood. He often defined his ideal child by contrast; his child was not "a piece of wax, a lump of clay, from which [man] can mold what he will" (p.5), nor was he "a void that man needs to inoculate with life" (p.38), or "the little, wicked, spiteful devil" (p.76) of religious literature. The child was, for Froebel, the purest expression of humanity, and childhood, the time in which the self had its roots.

The child was interpreted also as transcending his own individuality and as an embodiment of the history of humankind. Like many others before and after Darwin, Froebel believed that a law of recapitulation was operative in nature. This law stated that every living being repeats

in his ontogenetic development the phylogenetic sequence. Recapitulation was a dominant element of Romantic science, closely related to the philosophical concept of "unity in diversity" (Gould, 1977).

This idea admits at least two variants: a cultural and a biological version. Froebel chose the former; he saw the development of the individual as a reenactment of the stages of civilization: "so repeats itself...in the experience of each child from its birth onwards, the history of the development and creation of all things as told by the sacred books, up to the point where man at last appears" (1827/1886, p.25). This reenactment was not seen as a curtailment of human freedom; on the contrary, "each man is to represent this development and cultivation again freely, as a type to himself and to others" (p.11). As will be seen again and again throughout this study, the idea of recapitulation in its different guises, is a vital element of most theories about the child, up to and including Jean Piaget.

The vicissitudes of Froebel's ideas in America and their practical application in the kindergarten have been studied on many occasions, particularly in the recent work of Shapiro (1983). The kindergarten movement, originally a captive of the German-American community, eventually became Americanized through the efforts of Elizabeth Peabody, Susan Blow, and several other pioneers. Gradually, it became

redefined and reduced from a early childhood program (toddlers to six-year-olds) to the initial year of elementary education. While the kindergarten movement met with great success, Froebel's ideas about the child did not fare so well.

American followers had considerable difficulties interpreting Froebel's works, which were studied with the care and dedication usually reserved for sacred books. From the beginning, a controversy raged between the strict Froebelians and those who followed the Hegelian interpretation. Elizabeth Peabody stood at the center of this debate for decades defending a strict orthodoxy while Susan Blow based her reading of Froebel on her knowledge of Hegel.

Elizabeth Peabody had discovered Froebel's writings late in life. As was pointed out above, she was a woman of extensive readings and important friendships (Baylor, 1965). In 1864, she published, jointly with her sister Mary Mann, Moral Culture of Infancy and Kindergarten Guide in which she combined a superficial knowledge of Froebel with a Romantic understanding of the child. On another occasion, she explicitly received Froebel into the Transcendentalist tradition when she wrote that "Mr. Emerson understood and believed with Froebel, the cosmopolite prophet of the nineteenth century, what Jesus meant when he said that 'whoever receiveth a little child in my name, receiveth me'" (quoted in Baylor, 1965, p.62). In the 1870s, after having

visited Europe and coming in contact with direct disciples of the German educator, Peabody embraced Froebel's ideas with renewed religious fervor. She was convinced that Froebel had found and revealed the "true secret about the nature of children," and that his ideas were "the living water, the true gospel" (Baylor, 1965).

The gospel Peabody preached in America was the millennial significance of the new understanding of childhood: "the second coming, I believe, is only to be realized by childhood's being properly understood, guarded, and educated..." (1876, p.249). Rushdoony (1963) observed rightly, although with some sarcasm, that the kindergarten was born to an exalted role: "it was to be the child's garden through which the world-wide Garden of Eden, paradise remade, was to be established" (p.268).

The full humanity of even the youngest infant was a recurrent topic in Peabody's writings; she affirmed that "the child is a living soul, from the very first, not a mere animal force but a person." As a spiritual being, the child is at the same time both sacred and extremely vulnerable: "children are at once the most helpless yet the most solemn and interesting of creatures" (1876, p.201). Therefore, the origin of evil had to be located in the environment and it could be eradicated through the right methods of education.

By the mid 1870s, the kindergarten became not only a cause but also a good business for toymakers. Peabody, and others, urged manufacturers to produce the Froebel Gifts for school use. Milton Bradley followed their suggestions and, in the process, discovered the American parent as a market for Froebel (Shapiro, 1983). In the search for greater sales volume and better profits, ideological nuances were disregarded; the Froebelian ideas were popularized and, at the same time, further distorted.

Commercialism was not the only danger to the integrity of Froebel's thought. In spite of the repeated claims by the most prominent kindergarten proponents that Froebel's spirit was to inform the daily life of the children, in practice, teachers spent most of their training memorizing stereotyped classroom procedures instead of studying his educational philosophy, fearful of departing from the orthodoxy. Margaret Naumburg (1928) analyzed the phenomenon perceptively in a fictitious conversation with two normal (teacher training) students. They commented on "the aridity of the Froebelian kindergarten in America." One of the students remarked that she was "used to thinking of the formal kindergarten as a place where they prefer make-believe rabbits and flowers and sunshine to the real thing," while the other remembered her own experience as a child in kindergarten with the following comment: "Think of the thousands of other children who must have been subjected to

the same humiliation of those gifts and occupations" (p.107). Naumburg pointed out that these distortions of Froebel's thought were caused by "stupid and worshiping disciples, but it was he who put his weight on the undeveloped inner power of children, and insisted on their capacity for self-activity" (p.108). As part of the progressive education movement, Naumburg rightly emphasized the ideas that determined Froebel's lasting contribution to American early childhood education.

A further element that contributed to the disintegration of the Froebelian vision was the sentimentalization of the child, already rampant in America when his ideas were introduced. While the importance of children derived, for Froebel, from the fact that they carried in them the germ of perfect humanity, the sentimentalized child acquired an importance per se. The active, real children of Froebel became "the holy innocents whose inner beings, angel-wise, do always behold the face of their father in heaven" (American Journal of Education, 31, 1881, p.705) or according to another writer, "children are living blessings which have drifted down to us from the imperial palace of the love of God...they still hear some of the faint music of God's life, still bear upon their faces traces of the uncreated light." (American Journal of Education, 31, 1881, p.281). Froebel's vision turned Wordsworthian in America, filled with

nostalgic connotations totally lacking in the philosophy of the German educator.

Closer to Froebel, and at odds with Elizabeth Peabody, Susan Blow took a stand for the young child and his education without falling into the sentimental excesses of other American followers. She participated in the early crusade for the public kindergarten and saw the movement change during her lifetime. Her name is associated with that of William Torey Harris, because of their long collaboration in the establishment of early childhood education in St Louis (Weber, 1969, Shapiro, 1983). Their ideas about the child, however, differed considerably.

Susan Blow was familiar with classic German literature and Hegelian philosophy. She thought about the nature of the child in philosophical terms, rather than in the messianic religious manner of Peabody. Blow saw in the child the first embodiment of the Spirit; it is this spirituality that she proclaimed and defended in her numerous writings, not the Froebelian orthodoxy as such, as Weber (1969) believed.

Blow considered that the young child's perceptive faculties were relatively stronger during the early years than they would ever be at any later period. According to Blow, ideas are formed in the mind by abstractions and generalizations from facts revealed through the senses.

Although not yet able to abstract, the child is able to store his perceptions in his memory. At a later point, when organized by reflection, perceptions would result in thoughts. Childhood was seen not so much as the seed of perfect humanity, but as the starting point of adult ideas. It is a time of simplicity in preparation for the complexities of adulthood; it is a time for the concrete to develop toward the absolute (Blow, 1875).

Symbolic education was for Blow the most appropriate method for young children. She considered the Froebelian gifts and his Mother Plays as embodiments of "typical phenomena" through which "the world into which the child is born is born again in him, and mere external surroundings are transfigured into an ideal environment created by his own activity" (1899, p.31).

It is interesting to note how Blow, a convinced Froebelian, nevertheless moved slightly away, toward a dialectical position, and was able to share some of the postulates of the cognitive-developmental view of the child. Blow quoted James Mark Baldwin's Mental Development of the Child (1894) to illustrate her understanding of imitation in childhood: "The child creates himself. He creates himself by reproducing his environment within himself" (Blow, 1899, p.29-30). In a later work, she adopted Baldwin's statement "What the child plays he is, he tends to become" (1908, p.38). For Froebel, on the other hand, play was "the

representation of the inner from the need of the inner itself" (1827/1886, p.30).

Blow always believed that hers was a rational, not mystical or sentimental, interpretation of Froebel. She was dismayed to see that Froebel's insights were discarded even before his gifts and occupations ceased to be standard kindergarten practice. She tried passionately to save a spiritualized concept of human nature that was fast disappearing under the advances of positivism. She opposed the application of the law of causality to the study of human beings, with its ensuing pessimism. She wanted to save them from a "fated universe" and see them living "in a community of free beings who have learned so to think and act that self-activity never defeats its own divine nature" (1908, p.21). She affirmed the primacy of play over work historically and as the expression of the human spirit; "through play we make ourselves. In work we use ourselves" (1908, p.271).

Susan Blow's dream of a humanistic education for young children could not be farther from the ideals of her long-time associate W. T. Harris. Harris saw the value of early education in the following terms: "the kindergarten gives us two years more of education than we can have now, and trains the pupil in an industrial direction, and makes him fit for all the manipulations of the art and trades"

(1879, p.57). Two years earlier he had stated his concept of the child when he wrote that

"education is emancipation...it emancipates the newly-born individual from his naturalness, his mere animality, his subordination to appetite and passion, and to merely external laws; this is done by subordinating him to the use and wont of human laws and customs, by civilizing him" (1877, p.18).

In 1881, Harris wrote that "the belief in the perfection of nature is the arch-heresy of education" (1881, p.638). Harris was a believer in progress, urbanization and industrialization (Curti, 1935). It is not surprising then that he saw in early education an opportunity to prepare the child for the industrial job market. The idea of the child as the hope for the moral regeneration of humanity seemed absurd to Harris:

"The apotheosis of childhood and infancy is a very dangerous idea to put in practice. It does well enough in Wordsworth's great ode as a sequence to the doctrine of preexistence; and it is quite necessary that we should as educators, never forget that the humblest child, nay, the most depraved child, has within him the possibility of the highest angelic being. But this angelic nature is only implicit, and not explicit, in the child or in the savage, or in the uneducated" (1881, p.637).

Harris believed in the importance of human institutions as necessary for the realization of true individualism (Curti, 1935). From this point of view, the child became "the poor squalid individual, an insignificant atom in space and time [who] can lift himself up to culture...by the aid

of these great institutions [library, schools, and newspapers]" (1881, p.638).

Harris' approach to education was one of cost-effectiveness. Concerned about the cost of the Froebelian kindergarten due to its necessarily low child/teacher ratio and small group size, Harris outlined what he called "the model of organization of the cheap kindergarten." He proposed to group 75 to 150 children in one room with teachers in a ratio of 1:30, bringing the annual cost per child down to six dollars compared to the twelve to twenty dollars per year for the elementary school child (1881, p.642). Harris is hailed as a pioneer of the kindergarten (Weber, 1969). Although it is undeniable that he supported its incorporation into public education, it is difficult to see how an educator who proposed such measures for children under six could have made a positive contribution to the education of young children.

Even the briefest survey of Froebelian ideas in America would not be complete without a mention of Colonel F. W. Parker. A "lover of small folk, an apostle of the dignity and divinity of childhood" (Curti, 1935, p.380), Parker wanted to see his beliefs come alive in American public education. He was a follower of Emerson's teachings, a student of German philosophy, and an admirer of Froebel's ideas on education.

In sharp contrast to Harris, Parker opposed all methods that mechanized or inhibited the child; he believed that "play [was] God's elementary method of training the child to work...Who ever saw anything but constant delight in the faces of little children in a true kindergarten, where hands and heads and hearts are in continual harmonious action?" (1896, p.156-157). Speaking of his proposed reforms, he addressed elementary school teachers with the eloquence of a prophet:

"I am describing no Utopia, but a reality that comes to those who have an immense faith in the capabilities of human development...You who, instead of feeding the child's wonderful, exhaustless power of imagining the good, the true, and the beautiful, driven where the cutting lash of tradition turns the grand study of history into a dry, stupid rote-learning of pages, will remember that the New Education leads you to the heights beyond Jordan, within sight of the Promised Land. Do not turn back to the rocky, sandy desert of Sin" (1896, p.88-89).

Parker chastised the teachers for their lack of faith in the capabilities of the child:

"There is no time in the child's life when he cannot see, judge, generalize, and imagine, providing the work is adapted to his mental capacity...Give the child time to grow, and wait patiently until the germs of power burst out of their fruitful soil of unconsciousness" (1896, p.101).

He was convinced that Froebelian teaching should be extended to the elementary school. To emphasize this point, Parker asked,

"When should [the kindergarten's] delightful play and work stop? When the primary teacher meets him at the door of a castle, fetters his active limbs to a hard seat, and imprisons his expanding mind in a narrow cell walled by unmeaning hieroglyphics? No! A thousand times no! It is a cruelty to stop the blessed work done in the kindergarten" (1896, p.157).

Messianic in his understanding of education, Parker like Elizabeth Peabody, found support in Froebel. Parker remarked that "Froebel said that the principles he discovered and advocated, when thoroughly applied would revolutionize the world; and he was right" (p.157). Rushdoony (1963) quoted Parker at the height of his messianic enthusiasm saying that "the heavenly light that fell on the hills of Bethlehem teaches us the divinity of the little child. 'Feed my lambs, feed my lambs,' and the gates of glory shall be lifted up and the King of Glory shall enter in" (p.106).

At a time when business was threatening the integrity of education, Parker's emphasis on spiritual altruism and his ideal of free and rich individuality for everyone brought "a vivid and regenerating spirit into the classroom" (Curti, 1935) which, unfortunately, was not destined to survive.

CHAPTER III

THE SAVAGE CHILD

CHILD STUDY FROM G. S. HALL TO A. L. GESELL

In the words of Nina Vanderwalker (1908), one of the first historians of American early childhood education, "the rapid development of the biological sciences during the seventies [1870s], due to the acceptance of the theory of evolution, had given rise to a new interpretation of life" (p.233). It also gave rise to a new interpretation of childhood expressed in numerous studies of children's characteristics by G. Stanley Hall and his disciples. From their work emerged the image of the child as a savage, biologically determined to repeat the phyletic and anthropological history of the human species.

Although many studies (Curti, 1935; Ross, 1972; Weber, 1984) have emphasized the continuity between the Romantic and Hall's conceptions of childhood, a close reading of Hall's work will show that this is not the case. Both traditions share a paidocentric view of education but Hall tried to free the study of the child from all philosophical implications, especially from the idealism prevalent in his day. During his formative years, Hall experienced the tension between philosophy and the "modern", that is, ametaphysical approach characteristic of American scientific thought of mid-century (Ash, 1982). In spite of

the nostalgic longings for his own rural childhood, which often gave his writings a Romantic tone, Hall decidedly stood at the beginning of a new tradition in the United States, that of the scientific study of the child.

Child Study, or paidology as Hall liked to call it, proposed a new way of looking at the child, based on the exact quantitative methods of positive science. It considered childhood as a particularly important period in the context of evolutionary theory since it was assumed that the seeds of change and stability were planted there (Lazerson, 1972). Children had to be observed under natural conditions, the way the scientist studied nature or the anthropologist observed primitive cultures. Child Study believed that a coherent definition of the child could be elaborated once all relevant data had been collected.

The rise of the Child-Study movement coincided with the Froebelians' struggle to establish themselves and acquire a degree of respectability in educational circles. Although many early childhood educators of the day remained untouched by the new movement, some perceived its polemic nature and attacked it, while a few others attempted to reconcile both definitions of the child. Emma Marwedel was one of the latter. In a symbolic intertwining of Froebelian ideas with the new "scientific" approach, she dedicated her book Conscious Motherhood (1887) to both Elizabeth Peabody and G. S. Hall. Elizabeth Harrison also attempted a

synthesis by adding a thin layer of evolutionary theory to the interpretation of Froebel in her Study of Child Nature (1890). The reverence for childhood survived for a while the arrival of science: the child, "instead of being alternatively a toy and a care, would become the center of a thrilling drama" (Marwedel, 1887, p.320).

Two European names are of great importance at the inception of the Child Study movement in America: Charles Darwin and Wilhelm Preyer. Both published careful observations of the early development of their infant sons. Although a touch of proud parenthood can be detected throughout their notes, the purpose was scientific. The child was objectified as an item of systematic, detailed, and accurate observation; the observer remained in the background, unaffected by emotions that could distort the data.

According to Kessen (1965), Darwin changed the notions about the child so dramatically that, with a few exceptions, all modern conceptions of childhood are variations on the naturalist's basic themes. For Darwin, the nature of man could not be understood by the analysis of his adult functions; man had to be studied in his origins--in animals and children: "Darwin gave us the child as a legitimate source of scientific information about the nature of man" (p.117).

Wilhelm Preyer, a follower of Darwin, was the author of the first Darwinian dissertation in Germany (Jaeger, 1982). The influence of evolutionary thought permeated all Preyer's work and replaced the speculative natural philosophy of Schelling, still current at the time. But Preyer limited himself to the theory as expressed in The Origin of Species and chose to ignore The Descent of Man. His work avoided all discussion of moral or social values (Ash, 1982) and intended to report only observed behaviors in an objective manner. Preyer's writings contained, however, as Kessen (1965) has said, "an interweaving of observation, interpretation, and commentary that cannot always be dissected, and the reader must make the complicated decision, often without adequate evidence, about the likelihood of Preyer's being deceived by his parental affection or, far more often, his theoretical presuppositions" (p.132).

Preyer turned to the child to study the development of the human mind in the individual and in humankind as an empirical study of reason. After considering the comparative anatomy and physiology of simple organisms, supplemented by the observation of animal instincts, as the key to the explanation of the human mind, he concluded that the data collected from these studies could not be used in human psychology. Instead he chose the child as the main point of methodological access to the adult mind.

If the child could be isolated from all "training" for a few years, then, Preyer believed, his innate disposition would emerge in pure form for scientific observation. However naive this hope for "unadulterated mental development" (Preyer, 1889, p.188) was as a research design, Preyer did observe his son continually for three years from birth on. He was careful to include only those observations which he considered objective and accurate. He also attempted to corroborate his own observations with those of others of his own child and he added numerous examples of other children's behavior, normal and abnormal.

Preyer's fundamental assumption was that the child's mind, at the time of birth, does not resemble

"a tabula rasa upon which the senses first write their impressions, so that out of these the sum-total of our mental life arises through manifold reciprocal action, but the tablet is already written upon before birth, with many illegible, nay, unrecognizable and invisible marks, the traces of the imprint of countless sensuous impressions of long gone generations" (1888, p.xiv).

Through careful observation of the child the scientist believed he had understood "what a capital each individual has inherited from his ancestors...heredity is just as important as individual activity in the genesis of the mind" (p.xiv).

The sequence of development was seen to proceed from the dominance of one aspect of the child to another.

According to Preyer, the child was born dominated by reflexes, drives, and instincts. The development of senses and emotions constituted the next step, followed by the emergence of the will, until finally, development culminated with the growth of intellect and language. Following a mechanistic model, Preyer postulated the existence of a motor of development, an unconscious causal drive, a sort of "inner intellect".

In the observations of his son, Preyer paid particular attention to the appearance of the will. He believed he could trace its origin through the careful observation of the child's muscular movements. He saw that at first, the "inborn" movements are completely will-less, but after the senses have developed sufficiently, willed movements can take place. Thus, Preyer considered development as the increasing complexity of voluntary movements. Since he defined will as "the reciprocal action of motor ideas" (1888, p.339), he was able to separate its development from that of the intellect. Preyer concluded that young children exhibit a "weakness of will...a surprising credulity, docility, tractableness; the slight degree of independence of will in young children...reminds one of the similar behavior of adults in mesmeric sleep" (1888, p.345).

The development of the intellect was, of course, an area of great interest for Preyer. Here, he addressed the

still debated matter concerning the relationship of language and cognition and set out to dispel "a widely spread prejudice [that] asserts 'there is no intellect without language'" (Marwedel, 1887, p.501). Of all the observations he made of his son, Preyer considered "the formation of concepts without language...the most opposed to the traditional doctrines" (1889, p.208) and the one on which he placed the greatest stress.

Ideas are not innate, Preyer concluded, rather the aptitude to perceive things and to form ideas is inherited. The newborn's brain is inscribed with all the impressions left by the ancestors; useless ones will be obliterated while the useful ones will survive. Of these, the ordering function is one of the oldest impressions, according to Preyer. The capacity for classification was seen as totally independent from speech; it was assumed that this capacity was present even before the senses became active. Preyer considered this the evolutionary explanation of Kant's apriori, a conclusion that foreshadowed Piaget's construction of the categories of thought. It was this capacity to form concepts and to perform logical operations, argued Preyer, that furnished "the material for bridging over the only great gulf that separates the child from the brute animal" (1889, p.212).

Language acquisition was a topic of great interest for Preyer. He studied this process through the observation

of pathologies which, he believed, permitted him to arrive at solid physiological conclusions. According to Preyer's conclusions, the first cry of the infant was of a reflexive nature, later the sounds the child made were proof of newly completed "nerve-lines" although he did not possess "a center of speech"; at this point, the child was described as "alalic." The various babbling sounds of the infant were compared by Preyer to the "joyous barking and whining of the poodle" (1889, p.68).

According to Preyer, "the strong, healthy child is on the same mental plane with animals" during the first year of life. In his second year, the child stands "higher intellectually than a sagaciously calculating yet speechless elephant or Arabian horse," not because he is learning to speak, "but because he already forms many more and far more complex concepts" (1889, p.78).

During their development, children have to assimilate all the advantages of the human race and have to acquire the feeling of "self-as-a cause." In this way, they will gradually overcome the animal nature of their first stage and become thinking human beings. In adulthood, Preyer hoped, a person should encounter "the greatest satisfaction ... [in going] back in his thoughts to his earliest childhood, for that period teaches him plainly that he has his

origin in nature, is intimately related to all other living creatures" (1889, p.219).

The educational implications of Preyer's conception of the child may be summarized as "first nature without training, and then culture" (Jaeger, 1982). Education was asked to suppress the hereditary defects and maximize the hereditary advantages; it is described as a natural process in which any premature "training" should be avoided.

Preyer's observations launched the evolutionary study of childhood. Soon many scientifically oriented parents followed his lead and a fad of child-observations started on both sides of the Atlantic. In all these works, the tone was one of eager anticipation for signs of fulfillment of the ideal (Kessen, 1965). The child is conceptualized as an incomplete adult, still uncivilized, striving through a succession of approximations, to reach manhood as defined by Western culture. One of the best known works of this kind was M. W. Shinn's Biography of a Baby (1900) based on the observation of her niece, Ruth. Shinn saw the importance of such an endeavor in "the light we may get on the past of the human race," and pointed out the resemblances between babies and monkeys, and between boys and members of barbaric tribes; "a fresh copy of the whole history, from alpha to omega, is written out every time an infant is conceived, and born, and grows to manhood" (p.8). She acutely perceived the qualitative differences between the

young and the adult human and exhorted readers "to regard the infant as a different animal from the adult, almost as the caterpillar is different from the butterfly." (p.22)

Darwin's theory contributed to the new scientific valuing of infancy and early childhood when he reclassified the human species as members of the category "animal." This created the problem of finding the determinant factor of man's unique position at the top of the evolutionary scale. John Fiske, a professor at Harvard, published in 1874 his Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy in which he is one of the first to single out the prolonged human infancy as the main difference between man and animal (Hofstadter, 1955). Fiske became very popular with his short work The Meaning of Infancy (1883/1909) in which he analyzed this period of maximal plasticity and dependency as an evolutionary tool. Fiske observed that animals like the codfish or the turtle, have no real infancy; heredity does everything for them, education, nothing. Higher animals have progressively longer periods of initial helplessness and, consequently, a greater degree of educability.

In human beings, a steady increase of intelligence carried with it an equally steady prolongation of infancy. Instead of being born with a few thoroughly organized instincts, humans are born, according to Fiske, "with the germs of many complex capacities" (1883/1909, p.11). In spite of this malleability, however, "our inherited

tendencies and aptitudes are...still the main thing...[but] we have at last acquired great power to modify them by training, so that progress may go on with ever increasing sureness and rapidity" (p.12). In addition to the optimism reflected by Fiske's appreciation of infancy, his conclusions implied, as Kagan pointed out,

"a deep belief in continuity of character from infancy to later childhood; it served to keep parents self-conscious about their actions with their babies; and it was an argument for building good schools. It also provided an experiential explanation for individual differences in adult success, which was attractive to a democratic and egalitarian society" (Kagan et al., 1978, p.55)

The towering representative of Darwinian theory in American psychology and education was G. Stanley Hall. In his Autobiography (1923), he recalled his early fascination with the concept of evolution:

"To conceive the whole world, material and spiritual, as an organic unity, to eliminate all breaks and supernaturalism, and to realize that everything within and without was hoary with age, so that in most experiences we were dealing only with the topmost twigs of vast but deeply buried trees, gave me a totally new aspect of life" (p.359).

Hall did not exaggerate when he affirmed that the evolutionary idea permeated all his work, both methodologically and ideologically. He contributed to the introduction of evolutionary concepts into psychology and popularized the

idea that the mind is as much a product of the slow evolutionary forces as the body was accepted to be.

Hall's elaborate and florid style, his love for hyperboles, and his roots in German philosophical thought often gave to his works a tone similar to that of the Romantics. He frequently, however, expressed his distaste for idealism as the theoretical base for Child Study. As a believer in the new empiricism, he stated that "the animal, savage, and child soul can never be studied by introspection" (1908, I, p.vii). His personality, "part scientific psychologist, part social reformer, and part mystic appealed to those who wanted to understand, rescue, or revere the child" (Strickland & Burgess, 1965). Separated from the Froebelians by the deep intellectual gulf between idealism and Darwinism (Shapiro, 1983), Hall formulated a new view of the child. With it, he dealt a most destructive blow to the orthodox kindergarten movement.

Credited with founding the Child Study movement and called during his lifetime "the Darwin of the mind" (Hall, 1923, p.360), Hall reached a multitude of teachers and enlisted their cooperation in the recollection of information about children. Hall's questionnaire method asked teachers, and also parents, to observe children in their natural habitat, home and school, following questionnaires prepared by Hall and his students at Clark University. This cooperation with university professors provided a sense of

pride to teachers, who felt recognized as professionals and legitimate contributors to advanced research. On the other hand, educational leaders were reluctant to support Hall's eclectic views on education. Although his ambition was to establish a new psychology, Hall's methods were not taken seriously by the scientific community and became totally discredited by the early 1900s (Siegel & White, 1982).

At a time when educational politics were dealing primarily with the enlargement and reconstruction of the secondary school, Hall decided to publish the Pedagogical Seminary, a journal dedicated almost exclusively to child development and early education. His scientific approach and his support to the efforts to reform the kindergarten separated him from the small movement of upper-class women who promoted early education under the banner of Froebelianism (Siegel & White, 1982). Hall was a constant presence at the National Education Association meetings where he battled the traditionalists. In 1893, he won a significant victory when the NEA established a Department of Child Study (Strickland & Burgess, 1965).

Hall believed that Child Study had changed the way teachers perceived children: "The teacher...no longer regards his pupils as marionettes, to be treated as groups or classes, but as free units, with a bond of sympathy between each of their hearts and his own" (Hall, 1900/1965, p.87). Educators would benefit by the understanding of the

true nature of the child since scientists

"are slowly awakening to the recognition that children are not like adults, with all their faculties of maturity on a reduced scale, but unique and very different creatures...the child's senses, instincts, views of truth, credulity, emotions, and feelings have very little in common with ours, and indeed, are sometimes almost incommensurable" (Hall, 1900/1965, p.88-89)

As the champion of an evolutionary psychology, Hall believed that adults would understand children only when they recognized that children's behavior replayed the phyletic past (Gould, 1977). Following an elaborate formulation of the theory of recapitulation, Hall's child represented "the expansion of the individual soul to the dimensions of the race" (Hall, 1907, p.v). Recapitulation begins at the moment of conception;

"in this process the individual, in a general way, repeats the history of its species, passing slowly from protozoan to metazoan stage, so that we have all traversed in our own bodies ameboid, helminthoid, piscian, amphibian, anthropoid, ethnoid, and we know not how many intercalary stages of ascent" (Hall, 1908, I, p.2).

Hall was not alone in the detailed account of the evolutionary stages of child development. Chamberlain (1902), for example, provided an extensive catalogue of ontogenic-philogenic parallels. Over and over, recapitulatory observations appeared not only in education and developmental psychology, but also in sociology, economics, law,

criminology, and almost every other field of human endeavor. The recapitulationist view became for a time, the accepted way of describing children. Gould (1977) mentioned the British paleontologist S. S. Buckman who regarded his own babies as miniature apes. Buckman tried to identify in his children all the physical and behavioral characteristics that were the testimony of a simian past: puffy cheeks, relatively long arms, the tendency to sleep on their stomachs.

Hall, however, did not limit his theory to observable behavior or physical parallels; he took the controversial step to include the human soul in the general process of evolution; "do we not dishonor the soul by thinking it less complex or less freighted with mementoes of earlier stages of development than the body which, in the amniotic fluid medium, unfolds its earlier prenatal stages like a fish" (quoted in Gould, 1977, p.139). In another passage, Hall affirmed that "the unconscious or racial factors of the human soul are older, vaster, and stronger than the conscious...the soul has been genetically evolved" (1918, p.318). In consequence, psychology became natural history: "the true ultimate knowledge of our psyche is the description of all developmental stages from the amoeba up" (Hall, 1909/1965, p.41).

These developmental stages were precisely defined in Hall's theory. The human embryo, shortly after conception,

experienced the invertebrate stage, then the stage of the fish and the amphibian, and by the third month of pregnancy, it reached the reptilian stage; "phylogenetically, the embryo lives a thousand years in a day" (Hall, 1908, p.3).

Gradually, Hall theorized, the foetus acquired the anthropoid characteristics and at birth the child exhibited the so often mentioned atavisms of the ape. The young child advanced to the stage of the cave dweller and slowly developed by traversing through increasingly civilized stages. The great step into modern Western civilization, however will only be taken after puberty.

All behaviors are interpreted in the frame of the theory of recapitulation. Consequently, dreams and nightmares were considered as expressions of the fears inherited from our ancestors; the baby's fear of strangers stemmed from the primitive struggle for survival. Young children's tendency to run away was seen as a replay of the migratory instincts of the nomads; the love for water play is the reliving of "man's pelagic ancestry" (Hall, 1907, p.288). Children's drawings represented "the physioplastic stage of paleolithic man. Here again, a well-recognized phyletic stage has dwindled to little more than a flimsy vestige in the modern infant, but it is as recognizable as the rudimentary gill-slits in the embryo" (Hall, 1909/1965, p.45).

From the cognitive point of view, children passed very rapidly "through many strata of intelligence...each

stratum was once, with but little elaboration, or is somewhere, the highest culture, relegated to and arrested in an earlier stage, as civilization and educational methods advance" (Hall, 1907, p.36).

In play, the child enacts the primitive traits of mankind in an unconscious way. Dolls, for example, are interpreted as idols for children experiencing the pagan stage; the child's love of dolls, "must include some widespread animism, if not fetichism" (Hall, 1907, p.238). In "The Story of a Sand Pile" (1907, p.142-156), Hall charmingly described the play of a group of boys during several successive summer vacations in New England. He wrote this piece as an example of research that "takes us of the present back to prehistoric times, and enables us to see today how primitive society first arose" (1907, p.vi). In the boys' play, Hall believed he could observe the development of laws, the emergence of values and mutual consideration, the evolution of industrial tools and processes, and the beginnings of institutions.

Morality was also interpreted as the result of evolution and a characteristic, according to Hall, of more advanced civilizations; primitives, like children, are impelled to follow their instincts and drives. Through his questionnaires, Hall believed that he had discovered, for example, that the drive to own was one of the strongest

passions of childhood. Children lie and steal in order to acquire property because they are aware of the evolutionary advantage implicit in it;

"these things are natural in children. Selfishness is the corner of the struggle for existence, deception is at its foundation...these passions of the child are but the pent-up forces of the greed of thousands of years ...Let the child be selfish, let him lie and cheat, until these forces spend themselves" (Hall, 1907, P.266-267).

Finally, Hall believed that the child was "vastly older than the adult" (1918, p.311). Wordsworth's famous line, so often quoted by the Froebelians, acquired here a new meaning: "Thus the boy is father of the man in a new sense in that his qualities are infinitely older and existed well compacted untold ages before, more distinctly human attributes were developed" (1908, I, p.x).

In a Rousseauian tone, Hall regarded the woods and the fields as the ideal environment for children. Examples abound in Hall's writings in which he praised the simple rural life of the past. His own childhood in New England became paradigmatic of the ideal childhood:

"I realized that childhood can never be complete or fully lived save in the country, and I would not now exchange my boyhood experiences with nature and the primitive social and industrial conditions under which I was reared (which are now gone and can never be replaced) for any environment or training I could devise" (Hall, 1923, p.177).

Although Hall accepted the reality of formal education in the urban environment, he asked that no "human sapling" under the age of eight should be subjected to formal education:

"The child revels in savagery, and if its tribal, predatory, hunting, fishing, fighting, roving, idle, playing proclivities could be indulged in the country and under conditions that now, alas! seem hopelessly ideal, they could conceivably be so organized as to be far more truly humanistic and liberal than all the best modern schools can provide...we must perpetually incite the child to visit field, forest, hill shore, the water, flowers, animals, the true homes of childhood in this wild, undomesticated stage from which modern conditions have kidnapped and transported him" (Hall, 1923, p.x-xi).

Hall declared himself "an almost passionate lover of childhood" (1908, I, p.xviii); "childhood is our pillar of cloud by day and fire by night. Other oracles may grow dim but this one will never fail" (1900/1965, p.88). However, a certain harshness accompanied his theory. Training of the will was the goal of education; severe discipline and even physical punishment were deemed sometimes necessary methods of pedagogy in order to counteract "unnatural" tendencies:

"the only duty of the small child is habitual and prompt obedience. As the vine must twine and grovel, so the child comes unconsciously to worship idols; he obeys us with a deep sense of being our chattel and, at bottom, admires those who coerce him...The object of discipline is to avoid punishment, but even flogging should never be forbidden, the severe process of breaking the will is needful." (Hall, 1892, p.77).

The recapitulationist view of human nature resulted in a condescending view of children, and of all non-Western civilizations for that matter, who were all expected to look up to their phyletic "elders" (Hofstadter, 1955). Also implicit in this view of a forever upward moving evolution, is the search for an increasingly superior human being. Hall considered that this goal could be achieved through both education and eugenics: "If any kind of superman is ever evolved and the man of the present is destined to become a missing link like the Java man, nurture must come to the aid of nature with every hebamic art that eugenics and education can supply" (1923, p.538).

Gifted children should be singled out for extra attention while "dullards and subnormals" should be educated separately in order not to slow down the progress of the able. Hall was clearly not sympathetic to any kind of social welfare; he regarded the training of better individuals as the only solution to all social problems, a common American belief sharply criticized by Curti (1935).

The goal of rearing and training more capable individuals assigned an important, although very limited, function to women, that of healthy procreation and the efficient care of the child. Emma Marwedel in Conscious Motherhood (1887), exhorted women to understand and assume their role as the agents of evolution and the makers of progress:

"Until woman learns to regard man as the product of evolutionary development, and until she is able to comprehend that she, as the mother of the race, is by nature and functions divinely selected to work for the ideal better and happier man, until this condition exists, no lasting progress can be expected" (p.151).

The way of becoming a conscious mother is not the Froebelian communion with the child-spirit, but the observation and study of the child and the keeping of careful accounts of his gradual development from birth onwards. Referring to the ancestral inscriptions supposedly left on the brain by countless past generations, Marwedel, like Preyer, recommended that "soul deciphering be the chief duty of the mother" (p.137).

Marwedel seemed to be more aware than Hall of what she calls "the dark side of advanced civilization," the insensitivity of the individual to the suffering of other beings, and the general inability to resolve conflicts in a peaceful way. The solution was again put on the shoulders of the child who is "man's civilizer, purifier, and redeemer" (p.17). And it is the mother who has the responsibility of preparing him for that role since "it is on the earliest guidance of man in the child that we rely for the fulfillment of our hopes for reform" (p.145).

While Marwedel sought to achieve a synthesis of Froebelian and evolutionary thought, the Free Play movement

aimed at nothing less than a complete reform of the traditional kindergarten according to Hall's ideas about the child. Play was the central issue around which the controversy moved. Froebelians interpreted play as the more or less stereotyped games introduced by the teacher, and usually executed to music; "the games are always played by a circle of children joining hands...the form of the circle itself, the symbol of unity [Froebel] held to be essential" (Wiggin, 1896, p.152). The Froebelians said "Man walks freely in directed paths" (p.153). The Free Play movement wanted to do away with those paths and restore the child to nature. Friedrich Burk, a student of Hall at Clark University wrote in 1899:

"The conviction for years latent and urgent for recognition, that free play is the only rational solution to Froebel's plea for self-activity the undoubted truth of the revelations of child study with regard to the ancestral and racial traits of childhood, led to the adoption of two recess periods of twenty minutes each for spontaneous play in the kindergartens, to take the place of the regular kindergarten games, and the eagerness with which the play incentives [toys] were appropriated and put into active service by the children revealed the strength of their interests" (quoted in Blow, 1908, p. 150-151).

The real issue went, as Blow (1908) noted, beyond the need for more recess periods. The recapitulationist view of the child demanded that all the kindergarten hours be taken up by free, undirected play. The objective of the new kindergarten, if it had to have one, was the development of the large muscles, the only activity considered appropriate for

young children. Froebelians never supported the theory that gross-muscle development had to be achieved before small muscles can be used, and saw with disgust the demise of fingerplays, beadwork, and other small-muscle activities. The Free Play teachers even redesigned Froebel's gifts to make them larger or rejected their use altogether.

Apparently only one pure Free Play kindergarten was ever implemented and the evolutionary ideas in its biological formulation held only a brief grasp on early childhood education. Nevertheless, Froebelian orthodoxy never regained its hegemony. Soon, progressivism would be the new influence on both early and elementary education.

Among G. Stanley Hall's students at Clark, no one had greater influence on America's notion of the child than Arnold L. Gesell. After receiving a Ph.D. in psychology under Hall, Gesell studied medicine at Yale and continued his research at that university for the rest of his professional career. In 1930, Gesell accurately evaluated the Child Study movement when he stated that "it has proved impermanent, much is already sicklied o'er with a caste of quaintness; but its historical influence is certain" (1930, p.9).

Gesell himself was a heir to the beliefs of Child Study. He kept alive the evolutionary view of infant and infancy. Hall's voice can almost be heard in Gesell's 1949

statement:

"The infancy of the human species has been prolonged and its plasticity has been greatly augmented; but the newborn baby does not by any means start from scratch. He is at birth already in possession of all the nerve cells he will ever have. These cells have much capacity for learning; but to no small extent their organization has been either fixed or channelized by the countless generations of a past which stretches back into a vista of a billion years. A baby...represents a vast cloud of ancestral witnesses compacted into a single individual" (p.13).

Through careful observation and recording of children's behaviors, Gesell came to the conclusion that all development equaled growth and that all growth obeyed natural laws. He sustained that development was scientifically observable through behavior "which always tends to fall into ordered patterns" (1930 p.302). Behavioral pattern are directly determined by biochemistry and neural activity. The influence of the environment did not play a part in this theory. Gesell's medical definition of development dispensed completely with any speculative underpinnings, and proposed child psychology as a branch of the natural sciences.

The medical-biological model of the child defined education as a combination of "guidance" and preventive mental hygiene. Even the "normal child" became a patient in the course of his nursery school education. Gesell's goal was to educate public opinion as to the significance of

behavioral problems and "the mental hygiene control of the parent-child relationship" (1930, p.10). The nursery school was set up to fulfill the function of a clinic where disorders could be prevented, detected, and treated, "as a new device for raising standards of child hygiene" (1930, p.11).

The postulated lawfulness of development permitted the establishment of norms which, in turn, created the concepts of "the standard child" and "optimal growth." Gesell was well aware of the controversial nature of his theoretical approach. But he defended the use of developmental standards, arguing that norms do not create a mold but a lens through which the child is observed. Gesell admitted that some of the criticism was justified given the imperfections of standardization of his day but the problem he believed, "[could] only be corrected with more standardization." (1930, p.148).

Fixed intelligence was the implied premise of standardization. Although Gesell conceded that early childhood was a time of plasticity in personality formation, he did not believe that native intelligence would be improved by a favorable environment. Conversely, neither would temporary adversity affect "the stable substrate of neurologic maturation which tends to assert itself in behavior that is characteristic of the child's basic maturity" (1930, p.232).

Gesell provided an interesting description or blueprint of the "normal" child. As an infant, "his personality is a growing multitude of pattern of behaviors of eating, sleeping, playing, obeying, of liking and disliking, of fearing, of avoiding, of assertion." Later these patterns change into "wholesome habits" which are considered "the first letters of the alphabet of nervous and mental health." (1930, p.151)

The "thoroughly normal child" has positive emotional "habits" and an "optimistic philosophy of life." In the tradition of Hall's individualism, Gesell's child had to learn to be self-reliant and independent. Just as "the grown soldier," he needed confidence and "fiber" to meet the realities and discomforts of life. Moral training consisted in the development of "fortitude, one of the sterner graces of the soul" (1930, p.173), which will permit the child to face life independently as soon as possible.

Since independence and detachment were considered the hallmarks of the normal child, a close parent-child relationship was interpreted as parasitic; it implied adult selfishness and it was seen as a crippling influence on the child's personality. Parents were expected to interact with their children only in ways that strengthen the moral fiber: "natural affection...too frequently leads astray... parents must be ever ready to assume a judicial, impersonal attitude" (1930, p.160).

Gesell likened his vision of a guidance clinic in every neighborhood to the campaign to purify the milk supply in order to decrease infant mortality. He believed that his theory and his methods would provide an eminently useful social tool to prevent all kinds of social ills and to strengthen "the psychological stamina of succeeding generations" (p.15).

CHAPTER IV
THE SPIRITUAL CHILD
MONTESSORI'S IDEA OF CHILDHOOD

Traditional Froebelians and reformers of the liberal wing of the kindergarten movement were still debating the relative value of a philosophical or a psychological approach to early childhood education, when a few American parents and teachers discovered Montessori's work among the poor children in the Roman slums. The first reports described her method as similar to Froebel's but "based not on philosophical theory, but on the results of scientific experiment, and all that modern psychology has discovered in regard to the development of the senses and intelligence" (Smith, 1912a, p.63). The news of the success of the Casa dei Bambini in Rome attracted numerous visitors; many returned full of admiration and respect (Smith, 1912a; Ward, 1913; Fisher, 1913), while others, Elizabeth Harrison and Patty Smith Hill among them, expressed their skepticism (Weber, 1969). The kindergartners, liberal, moderate, and traditional, however, did all agree that the stress on academic achievement negated the special opportunities for learning through play and imagination during the early years (Shapiro, 1983).

Maria Montessori's scientific credentials as a physician, psychologist, and anthropologist lend great credibility to her ideas and contributed to the first wave

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of interest. This was a time when many teachers looked to science for solutions to the baffling contradictions of sectarian controversy. What they found in Montessori and her ideas was complex and unexpected. And for a diversity of reasons, the fascination with Montessori soon faded in the United States.

In Europe, a number of faithful disciples assembled around Montessori, in a relationship that was in part personal and in part intellectual. The movement has preserved to this day this ambiguous character, part discipline and part devotion, which has limited its influence on the mainstream of American educational thought. In addition, Montessori's insistence on the use of her name and the personal control of every aspect of her method, although intended specifically to retain its unique character, contributed to a degree of stagnation and isolation of her ideas (Lazerson, 1972; Kramer, 1976). Nevertheless, in spite of all circumstantial shortcomings, Montessori's educational method was solidly grounded on an ambitious conception of the child; her theories have, in Forest's (1927) words, "stimulated thought and discussion in addition to contributing some worthwhile suggestions" (p.183).

There are, in studying Montessori's idea of the child, two periods or versions to consider. Her first application of the method in the slums of Rome was based on a powerful but relatively simple idea: the child as a

self-realizing spirit. Later, after the first World War, she elaborated on the ideas put forth initially in The Montessori Method (1912/1964). In order to analyze the first impact of Montessori in America after 1910, it is necessary to examine her early definition of the child separately from the more mature formulation in works like The Child in the Family (1936/1970) and The Absorbent Mind (1949/1967).

Montessori's ideas were perceived as original by her followers from the start. One of her students remembered the early lectures and wrote that "the child was considered from a point of view so different from what was at that time to be found in books for teachers that the student felt as if they were breathing bracing air" (quoted in Kramer, 1976, p.137). Indeed, Montessori elaborated her image of the child in opposition to the ideas underlying educational practices in Italian schools and homes at the time.

The work with the mentally impaired revealed to Montessori unsuspected sources of strength and abilities hidden in the child. This inspired her to observe and study normal children. She discovered, as so many educational reformers before and after her, that children were subjected to practices that impeded their true nature to come forth:

"We have, until the present day, wished to dominate the child through force, by the imposition of external laws,

instead of making an interior conquest of the child, in order to direct him as a human soul. In this way the children have lived beside us without being able to make us know them" (1912/1964, p.117).

Montessori considered that science had taken over the school; the modern teacher, wrapped up in the new methods, had forgotten about the child. The symbol of that attitude was for her the school desk, designed scientifically to prevent the deformation of the spine while ignoring the child's fundamental need for free movement; "this is the logical consequence of a material application of the methods of science to the decadent school" (1912/1964, p.19). Traditional teachers did not fare any better; according to Montessori, they only repeated mechanically "the principles of metaphysical philosophy" (p.7) that they have learned without understanding the needs of the human spirit.

Montessori wanted to go beyond pedagogy and scientific information. Of herself she wrote: "My intention was to keep in touch with the researches of others, but to make myself independent of them proceeding to my work without preconceptions of any kind" (p.22). She asked the same of all teachers. After learning the basic techniques, they should seek to discover the spirit in themselves in order to reach the spirit of the child. Children cannot be studied like bacteria or insects; the scientific attitude has to be accompanied by a spiritual understanding of the uniqueness of the human child.

Respect and reverence characterized Montessori's understanding of the child: "The child is a body that grows and a soul that develops,-these two forms, physiological and psychic, have one eternal font, life itself. We must never mar nor stifle the mysterious powers which lie within these two forms of growth" (1912/1964, p.154). Since the child was defined as an essentially unknowable entity, she could not be the subject of scientific analysis. According to Montessori, what the child is during childhood will only be known when her potentialities become actualized in the adult. Meanwhile, adults can only stand back and provide the freedom and dignity the child needs for her optimal development.

For Montessori, development proceeded from within, animated, as it were, by an inner force. This force was defined as biologic rather than in the philosophic terms postulated by Froebel. The Montessorian child developed because "the fruitful germ from which his life has come develops itself according to the biological destiny which was fixed for it by heredity" (1912/1964, p.105). Environmental influence was considered of secondary importance; "it can modify in that it can help or hinder, but it can never create" (p.105).

Environment could destroy, however; its effects were most destructive on the young and the weak. If an organism is unable to adapt to its environment, it will

become extinct. Montessori believed that this evolutionary law also applied to human individuals. Therefore, the young child, always described as fragile and weak, was in need of the most perfect environment to support and protect his development.

Thus, although Montessori believed in the power of life, "the superb goddess," the environment had to be carefully designed to maximize the chances for optimal outcomes. Every detail of the physical surroundings would affect the child. Objects were not placed in the Montessori room only as opportunities for sensori-motor stimulation, they were selected with a total vision of the way they determine and influence the behavior and experiences of the child. Order and beauty in the environment will result, in a mysterious and unexplained way, in an internal spiritual order.

In the ideal environment, the child became independent from adult interferences and, thus, was free to manifest his uniqueness. In Montessori's conception of the human being, there was a close relationship between the every day skills and obligations, and the superior life of the spirit. Consequently, children's independence, their ability to care for their own needs, to a large extent, were conceptualized as means to the liberation of their inner forces. Freed from the need of constant adult help, children's motivations became intrinsic and their

satisfactions were derived from the increased control they themselves acquired over life.

Independence was a cardinal virtue of the Montessori child. Montessori observed that every infant was unavoidably dependent on the social context given his initial helplessness. This situation creates "social bonds which limit his activity" (1912/1964, p.95). The first educational efforts, then, must help the child to overcome the obstacles imposed by society and "lead the child toward independence" (p.95). Adult interference "is dangerous, since it tends to suffocate their useful, spontaneous activity" (p.97). A mother who washes or feeds her child, instead of providing the opportunity for independence, "offends the fundamental human dignity of her son, -she treats him as if he were a doll, when he is a man confided by nature to her care" (p.98). The child, whose original nature is "so patient and gentle," is made to fight against the adults who are stifling "that occult impulse within him." In the metaphorical language of political liberation often employed by Montessori, she described the child as "a rebel, a revolutionist, an iconoclast, against those who do not understand him" (1912/1964, p.359).

Montessori education, then, was planned as an unobtrusive arranging of the environment in order to offer the child the opportunities to work on his own development. The teacher has only "to stimulate life, -leaving it then

free to develop, to unfold, -herein lies the first task of the educator" (1912/1964, p.115). The method, however, focused on the senses which develop very rapidly during the early years; the environment provided materials so the senses would become organized and refined through the child's spontaneous activity. The role of the adult is that of an observer;

"humanity shows itself in all its intellectual splendor during this tender age as the sun shows itself at the dawn, and the flower in the first unfolding of the petals; and we must respect religiously, reverently these first indications of individuality" (1912/1964, p.87).

Intellectual life and academic skills, according to Montessori, would spring from the foundation provided by the senses as a result of "the psychic potentialities of the child himself" (1912/1964, p.230). An insatiable desire for knowledge animated the free and independent Montessori child. He derived joy and strength from self-directed learning and would prefer reading and writing over the chance to play. After visiting one of her schools, Montessori wrote that "the discovery that it was knowledge they [the children] loved and not the silly game, filled me with wonder and made me think of the greatness of the human soul" (1912/1964, p.300).

Montessori's idea of the child also contained elements of recapitulationism; children, in their development, followed the natural way of development of the human

race. The transition from the primitive to the civilized occurred when humankind discovered agriculture; according to Montessori, "the same path must be traversed by the child who is destined to become a civilized man" (p.160). In the context of this belief in development as progress, her goal was not limited to meliorating the conditions in the Roman neighborhoods; Montessori saw in her system a way of promoting "universal human progress" (p.82). Through her method, children would reach "a higher stage of evolution than our own" (p.376).

The Americans who visited the original Montessori schools were greatly impressed by the children's activity, self-discipline, and the achievements in reading and writing which they considered equal "to that of the second and third grades" (Smith, 1912a, p.1). The problem they all confronted was how to interpret the new ideas in the light of the Froebelian kindergarten. Smith (1912b) considered that "the fundamental principles which distinguish Dr. Montessori's method are complete liberty of the child in its spontaneous manifestations and the utilization of every particle of its natural energy" (p.281). Warren (1912) admired the absence of rewards and punishments and the children's freedom to come and go. Ward (1913) was intrigued by "these self-contained, energetic little beings" (p.21). The most important characteristic of the method was, for the

American visitors, the smooth and ease of class management and the spectacular learning of academic skills rather than the new spiritual image of the child.

Dorothy Caenfield Fisher (1913) also visited the Casa dei Bambini in Rome and, like many other visitors, came away with similar impressions of busy and happy children. She, more than any other popularizer of Montessori, was able to perceive the new concept of the child implicit in the method. Therefore, Fischer aimed to reach with her writings, not only teachers, but also the American parent. In 1912, she published The Montessori Mother and a year later The Montessori Manual. Fischer emphasized the underlying ideas while noting that materials and techniques were only accessorial: "Everyone who wishes to adopt her system... must learn constantly to repeat to himself and to act upon, at every moment, this maxim, 'All growth must come from a VOLUNTARY action of the child HIMSELF.'" (1913, p.20). Fischer pointed out the three fundamental facts that characterize Montessori's child: he is an individual, his impulse to learn comes from within his own mind, and lastly, given the proper conditions, he prefers learning to any other occupation.

Fischer interpreted Montessori as a way of life for children, rather than a method of education. The aim of the new method "is not the acquisition of knowledge, but the desire and capacity to acquire knowledge" (1913, p.107).

The "Montessori life" is a "simple, industrious, tranquil life, with no excitements of joining in adult 'pleasures', full of profitable 'play' that is educational, and permeated with a sense of responsibility on the child's part for the conduct of his own life" (p.83). In this environment the child will become "the self-dependent, self-respecting, self-trusting citizen of his little world" (p.83).

Not all encounters with Montessori's ideas resulted in such understanding and praise. W. H. Kilpatrick, a close associate of John Dewey and an important educational thinker in his own right, also went to Rome to observe the new method. After his return, he published a short and lucid analysis which effectively put an almost complete and immediate end to the interest in the Montessori method. It would take almost fifty years before Americans became interested in it again.

Kilpatrick was not impressed by the scientific claims of the method. He also dismissed the novelty of the idea of education as development. Kilpatrick pointed out, correctly, its ideological antecedents in Rousseau, Pestalozzi, and Froebel. Furthermore, he attacked the common assumption of this tradition, that all that develops is good. In his view, development had to be restricted and guided by "the funded capital of civilization" (1914, p.8).

The idea of freedom for the child is another point of disagreement. In order to clarify his objections, Kilpatrick drew a parallel between Montessori and Dewey. The Italian educator accorded complete liberty to children, limited only by the needs of other children. Each child learned to respect the right of his neighbors "in an individualistic fashion" (p.16). On the other hand, for Dewey "no thinking worthy the name goes on apart from a felt problem, a thwarted impulse" (p.16). Problems, in this sense, arise only in a social context in a climate of freedom. Kilpatrick maintained that although Montessori did provide enough freedom, she ignored the developmental importance of socialization. He believed that "the best current thought and practice in America, would make constructive and imitative play, socially conditioned, the foundation and principal constituent of a program for young children" (1914, p.28). Freedom without opportunities for self-expression amounts to "a repression destructive alike of happiness and mental growth" (p.30).

Kilpatrick's analysis represented a view of the young child very different from Montessori's. For the progressive educator, the child was essentially a social being, educated through the demands of his peers and the larger society around him. Montessori's "isolated worker" could not be farther away from Kilpatrick's idea of the child. The artificiality of the Montessori apparatus, widely considered

at the time to be just a variation of Froebel's Gifts, was seen as a further negative element. According to Kilpatrick, "education is life; it must presume first hand contact with real vital situations" (p.60). The premature acquisition of academic skills, far from being admirable, was considered by the progressive educator as "foreign to child-nature" (p.60).

With Kilpatrick's chilling criticism, the short enthusiasm for Montessori died down in America. Hunt (1964) pointed out that Montessori's pedagogy was based on views too dissonant with the theoretical conceptions taking root at that time. Her assumption, for example, that the child had a spontaneous love of learning conflicted with the drive theory and the emphasis on sensory training ran contrary to behaviorism. Most importantly, according to Hunt, teachers could not accept the idea that children would choose their own materials and be in control of their own work without the need for praise or punishment.

While the formulation of her method and the design of the apparatus remained unchanged, Montessori did elaborate on her understanding of the child in the writings that followed The Montessori Method. Her style became more philosophical and more partisan. After the terrible experience of the first World War, she lost much of her

optimistic faith in the unlimited progress of society; the only surviving hope was symbolized in the child.

Even more intensely than before, she considered it her mission to liberate all the children of the world from adult oppression. More than ever she proclaimed the uniqueness of her idea of the child: "Our method...has led to the discovery of previously unobserved moral characteristics in children. Indeed, what emerged before us was the figure of a child yet to be discovered" (1936/1970, p.2).

The newborn and the toddler became the focus of Montessori's interest. She wrote with great tenderness about the child's "crisis of birth" and the utter helplessness and sufferings of the newborn. The baby should be understood as "the spiritual embryo,...a spirit enclosed in flesh in order to come into the world" (1936/1970, p.18). Montessori explicitly rejected the idea of infantile passivity and the concept of plasticity. These ideas, she argued, were derivations of adult feelings of pride. The child is born possessing a psychic life, "the key to his locked selfhood" (1936/1970, p.22). Development is a long internal struggle, made even more difficult by an environment which has "no awareness or acceptance of the fact of human incarnation" (p.22).

The first three years were seen as the most intense period of growth of the human being. During those years, children "are gifted with a psychic nature peculiar to them"

(1949/1967, p.3). The child is not only different from the adult but also incomprehensible to them. Alone, the child has to construct his cognitive, moral and religious world; "it is as if nature had safeguarded each child from the influence of adult reasoning, so as to give priority to the inner teacher who animates him" (p.5). Development was an individual process; the child created himself, intimately and dynamically, "as if he were a natural work of art" (1936/1970, p.20).

The observation of infants led Montessori to define cognitive development during the first few years of life as a process of absorption. Based on this view, she elaborated her basic conviction of the uniqueness and superiority of the child compared to the adult. The absorbent mind was the unconscious intelligence of the very young. While learning adults laboriously acquire one fact after another and store them in their memory, "a kind of mental chemistry goes on within [the child]...impressions do not merely enter his mind; they form it...How wonderful would it be if we could retain the prodigious capacity we had as children" (1949/1967, p.25).

At the age of three, "life seems to begin again. For now consciousness shines forth in all its fullness and glory" (1949/1967, p.164-165). According to Montessori, childhood is not a unitary period of life. Discontinuity and abrupt qualitative changes characterize the succession

of developmental stages; a sharp line of demarcation separates the infant from the preschooler. "The unconscious creator [the infant], this forgotten being, seems to be wiped out from human memory, and the child who comes to greet us at the age of three is a person we find it impossible to understand" (p.165). The three to six-year-old is the "conscious worker", he has to be constantly active in order to develop "his unfolding self" (p.171).

Aware of the criticism her individualism elicited, Montessori addressed the issue of socialization in The Absorbent Mind (1949/1967). Kilpatrick (1914) thought that social forces were the agents of individual development; Montessori turned the argument around. The Montessori child contributed to society through the special gifts of his spiritual life; children in groups will learn from one another and will enrich their experience in a way that cannot be planned by any adult designed social situation. Social cohesion was, for Montessori, the result of, not the condition for, individual development.

Montessori's plea for respect and reverence for the mystery of the child became more predominant in her later works. The adult as an obstacle to development was a recurring theme in her writings. Most problems in education, especially those related to individuality, character, and cognition, originated, according to Montessori, in the constant conflict between child and adult. The child,

observed Montessori, has two psychic states; one that is natural and creative, and another that is artificial and inferior resulting from the battle in which "the weak is attacked by the strong" (1936/1970, p.114). With the terminology of Marxism, she described the child as "a toiler, and the aim of his work is to make a man." (1949/1967, p.15). Although adults provide the means for the child's work, they are not entitled to any authority but that which comes "from the help they are able to give their children" (p.15). The "final revolution" will come when, by respecting and understanding childhood, "we may find that we are touching the secret of mankind, and into our hands will fall the knowledge of how it should be governed and how helped" (p.15).

There has been since 1958 a rebirth of interest in Montessori's educational ideas, marked by the establishment of numerous private Montessori schools, particularly in affluent suburban areas in different sections of the United States. During the intervening decades, the education of young children in general had become widely accepted. Nursery schools, based on ideas of socialization and mental hygiene, were part of almost every middle class childhood. The prevalent maturationist psychology had postulated free play and a healthy emotional atmosphere as the basic needs of children. A few educators voiced concern about this

benign neglect of children's intellectual capacities in the by then traditional nursery school. It is in this context that Rambusch (1962) and others, rediscovered Montessori.

It is interesting to note that it was not Montessori's spiritual child that attracted the second wave of interest, but rather the same precocious academic achievement, which had fascinated the first visitors to the Casa dei Bambini around 1910. The Montessori method, interpreted as a promise for early skills development, was eagerly adopted by parents anxious for their children to begin reading and writing before elementary school (Weber, 1969).

As an explicit reaction against John Dewey and critical of the oversocialization of the young that replaced intellectual learning as the main goal of education (Rambusch, 1962), educators looked to Montessori for a different notion of the potentialities of the young child. The child as a learner was a fitting ideal for a nation concerned about rising illiteracy. Rambusch (1962) rightly assessed the Montessori view of the child but her emphasis on the cognitive to the expense of the spiritual, created a child very different from the one the Italian educator had envisioned some sixty years earlier. Rambusch dedicated substantial sections of her study to demonstrate the parallelisms between Montessori's and Piaget's ideas of cognitive development. Lillard (1972) also considered that

there existed a consistency and compatibility between Montessori and Piaget. Although there are some correspondences between them, especially in their understanding of the child as an individual organism relatively impervious to societal influences and the disregard of emotions as an aspect of personality, the comparison would not stand up under closer analysis. Rambusch uses Piagetian principles to legitimate a program which would help the child "learn how to learn" (1962), a concept, however, which misinterprets both Piaget and Montessori.

The experimental confirmation of the importance of early experience on cognitive growth also seemed to support Montessori's ideas about education. Hunt, who through his research contributed to shake the belief in a fixed intelligence, became interested in Montessori while trying to find a theoretical solution to the problem of matching experience to the cognitive needs of the developing child. In the preface to a new edition of The Montessori Method, Hunt (1964) considered that Montessori had found the practical solution to the problem. He further recommended Montessori for the teaching of low socio-economic status children, an area in which the Italian method seemed to hold great promise.

Montessori's belief in the child as the agent for social regeneration was shared by the workers of the Great

Society. To some, the schools in the Roman slums seemed the ideal models for Head Start. One study (Orem, 1967) found that Montessori provided a solution to every need of "the deprived child." Concentration, academic skills, language development, every goal could be achieved through the method. But Orem also pointed out, although briefly, the important fact that the Montessori movement was essentially a civil rights movement "aimed at guaranteeing the rights of all children...the fundamental right of the child to his own full development, in an environment that provides the means necessary for this development, free of obstacles and subservience" (Orem, 1967, p.179-180).

The American approach to Montessori was marked from the beginning by the question of scientific validation. Warren (1912) already wondered how Montessori children would test on the Binet-Simon scales. The accountability thinking of Head Start subjected Montessori to the acid test of objective evaluation; the first scientifically designed research study in Montessori education was undertaken in 1965 (Lillard, 1972). Chattin-McNichols summarized in 1981 the research findings on the effect of Montessori schools. That the findings were encouraging is not as interesting as the list of items that were assessed. While Montessori's goal was the liberation of the human potential, a goal presumably untestable, the studies examined by Chattin-McNichols looked at academic achievement, school readiness,

performance on Piagetian tests, among others items. The misunderstanding of Montessori's philosophy continued. Montessori's child will find it difficult to survive in the mainstream of educational practice, and despite the optimism of the 1960s, will probably remain isolated in the private schools for the affluent. American educators still feel that Montessori "may have overemphasized the 'nature' of the child and underemphasized the significance of social conditioning" (Elkind, 1979, p.146).

Recently, Montessori education has been severely criticized by Polakow-Suransky (1982) as one of the causal factors of the contemporary erosion of childhood. The Montessori definition of the child as the isolated worker removed him from the world of play; spontaneity and creativity were limited by the work ethic and the constraints of the environment. The child, defined by Polakow Suransky as "active, playful, vigorous, mischievous" (p.99), would be labeled as deviant and pathological in the context of the Montessori classroom: "To be creative, then, was actually to be subversive of the social order of this minibureaucracy" (p.106). The description of the child as "miniworkers ...better fit, better adapted to function as future workers in a school system" (p.106), was derived by Polakow Suransky from classroom observation, not from Montessori's writings. It accurately described the distortion the original idea

suffered in an implementation not supported by the belief in the underlying idea of the child as a spiritual being.

CHAPTER V

THE POOR CHILD

THE IMAGE OF THE CHILD IN THE PHILANTHROPIC
MOVEMENT AND IN THE GREAT SOCIETY

In 1912, the Child Labor Bulletin (Vol. I, 3, p.64-65) published under the title "Contrasts," two photographs of children. In one, a healthy young boy was seen gathering flowers in a summer meadow; the other showed a three-year-old girl, gaunt and somber, assembling artificial flowers in a dark room. The two very distinct experiences of childhood symbolized in these pictures, and the double standard in the attitudes toward rich and poor children they implied, became a recurring issue in America during the closing decades of the 19th century (Hechinger & Hechinger, 1975). England had preceded the United States in an awareness of the problem, but only because it had experienced earlier the conditions of poverty, child labor, and overcrowded housing. It is a known fact that at a time when the reverence for childhood seemed to sweep Victorian England and the United States at the turn of the century, a substantial number of children were born in these countries to a life of deprivation and suffering (Sommerville, 1983).

This chapter will examine the conceptualization of the poor child formulated by those who attempted in different ways to protect children from the ravages of

detrimental economic and social forces. A second section of this chapter will address the issue of the discovery of the "disadvantaged child" in the 1960s and the ensuing arguments about the nature of this child.

Poverty is not a late 1800s invention. From the time of its origins, America dealt consciously with the problem. During the early decades, poverty was perceived as a relative term; communities found ways of providing for the minimum needs of those who, for reasons of illness, death, or disaster, were unable to provide for themselves. But during the second half of the 19th century, industrialization, with its accompanying increased urbanization and immigration, created a new kind of poverty, qualitatively different and of massive proportions. In the late 1800s, economic circumstances were such that even full-time work by every member of the family over the age of three, often would not bring relief from poverty. The very economic processes that promised ultimately to free humankind from want had the immediate effect of aggravating, rather than alleviating, the distress of the working class (Bremner, 1956). The massive urban poverty created a new concept of childhood, and at the same time, the outright disappearance of it for millions of children.

Rapid industrialization and uncontrolled immigration created unplanned urban growth; densely populated slums were

characteristic of all affluent and fast growing cities. It was in these slums that Americans discovered the problem of the poor child. Rural poverty had not been perceived as appalling, due in part to a lower incidence in these areas, and in part to the then prevalent romanticizing of the simple life in close contact with nature. In fact, rural life often was considered a palliative for poverty.

The majority of the inhabitants of the urban slum were immigrants and a few were black, circumstances that contributed to the middle-class perception of the slum dweller as alien, genetically inferior, devoid of moral feelings and sense of shame. The nativist explanation of constitutional inferiority was seemingly confirmed by "objective" mental testing. Gould (1981) described the way immigrants were tested on the Binet scale on arrival, often in a language incomprehensible to them, and under the most unfair circumstances. The "scientific" conclusion of the time was that most immigrants were of low intelligence, "perhaps moron grade."

The mental testing movement in America invented the hereditarian theory of IQ, misinterpreting and misusing Binet findings. As Gould (1981) aptly observed, their ideas were based on the equation of heredity and inevitability, and the confusion of the concepts of within- and between-group heredity.

The resulting fallacy which still finds supporters, permitted Goddard, for example, to label whole ethnic groups as feeble-minded. Even official public policy was based on Goddard's findings; in 1924, immigration was regulated by allocating quotas to countries according to their supposed group intelligence. Goddard also believed in the relationship of intelligence and social justice. He concluded that people doing the hard or monotonous work are usually in their proper places since they are "but little above the child". Speaking before a group of Princeton students, he said: "How can there be such a thing as social equality with the wide range of social capacity?" (both quotations in Gould, 1981, p.161). Terman and Thorndike also firmly believed that class boundaries had been established according to levels of innate intelligence.

Thus, hereditarianism was at the root of the acceptance of two childhoods, with different characteristics and needs, in the same society at the same time. It was most clearly expressed by social Darwinists, who found an evolutionary rationale for the inevitability of poverty. Herbert Spencer considered poverty, starvation and suffering,

"the decrees of a large, far-seeing benevolence...the highest beneficence, the same beneficence which brings to early graves the children of diseased parents, and singles out the low-spirited, the intemperate, and the debilitated as the victims of an epidemic" (In Will & Vatter, 1970, p.37-38).

According to Spencer, philanthropy or governmental attempts at ameliorating the conditions of the poor would contribute only to the biological and moral decay of society. W. G. Sumner, professor of political and social science at Yale, whose wholehearted espousal of social Darwinism under the motto of "liberty, inequality, survival of the fittest" (Hofstadter, 1955, p.37) did much to enhance the stature of that creed in the United States (Cremin, 1964), wrote that "if we do not like the survival of the fittest, we have only one possible alternative, the survival of the unfittest" (In Will & Vatter, 1970, p.39). As Hofstadter (1955) observed, Sumner interpreted the economic contest in a competitive society as a reflection of the struggle for survival in the animal world, and, therefore, a natural and unavoidable process. Huge fortunes were the legitimate rewards for economic virtue while poverty was considered the natural consequence of moral weakness: "Let every man be sober, industrious, prudent, and wise, and bring up his children to be so likewise, and poverty will be abolished in a few generations" (quoted in Hofstadter, 1955, p.47).

Thus, moral standards were used in order to justify the existence of poverty. Poverty was considered to be the

logical and deserved consequence of indolence, intemperance, and criminal inclinations; consequently there was great resistance against helping the adult poor. Indeed, the initial efforts to improve slum conditions were undertaken for the protection of the affluent, rather than out of a desire to help the poor. Even the help provided to destitute children was often given in order to insure future social peace and the status quo. Charles Loring Brace, a Darwinist and the founder of the Children's Aid Society, titled his book on the slum inhabitants, The Dangerous Classes of New York. In it, Brace told his generation to beware of the day when "the outcast, the vicious, reckless multitude of New York boys, swarming now in every foul alley and low street, come to know their power and use it" (quoted in Bremner, 1956, p.213). In fact, the original function of the Society he founded, was to transport homeless slum children to the West, as free labor for the farming families from Kansas to California (Langsam, 1964). It is true that the Society did this with a degree of concern for the well-being of the children and children generally fared immensely better in the rural environment than in the slum (Platt, 1969). Nevertheless, the explicit aim of the enterprise was not the welfare of the child but a step toward what Brace called "the moral disinfection of the city," aided by the demand for cheap agricultural labor. Brace also advocated better education for the urban child laborers because he

feared that, unless more attention was paid to their instruction, they would grow up to swell "the dangerous classes."

Amidst the then prevalent ideas of social Darwinism, emerged a movement of charity reform, under the motto "Not alms but a friend." Instead of impulsive or sentimental almsgiving, often done as a means for the moral betterment of the almsgiver, the "scientific philanthropists" registered all applicants for public or private assistance and collected pertinent information about them. They also investigated the need and worthiness of the persons seeking aid according to strict standards. Most of the new philanthropists were middle-class women with an individualistic interpretation of poverty and a pessimistic view of human nature. They tended to emphasize the investigative and repressive aspects of their work and often provided neither alms nor friendship to the poor.

In spite of these criticisms, scientific philanthropy made valuable contributions to the understanding of poverty as a social, rather than individual, problem. Its method required the consideration of each case rather than working with the stereotypes and preconceived notions about "the depraved" or "the dangerous classes." Furthermore, the new approach contributed to the realization that the treatment of poverty required more fundamental remedies than an increase in the generosity of the rich (Bremner, 1972).

At the same time, settlement houses began to be established in the slums of large cities. This movement, inspired by a similar one in England and by the religious missions established among the urban poor, saw itself as providing an outpost in the slum to help its inhabitants to find a way to better lives. The operative idea of the movement deserves to be mentioned because it influenced the conceptualization of the poor child. Where philanthropists and charitable persons had seen miserable wretches deserving either pity or correction, the settlement residents saw a fellow human being, with spiritual and intellectual as well as material needs.

Settlement workers were usually well-educated, middle- and upper-class men and women, who had an enthusiasm for altruistic work and were prepared to experience considerable personal hardships. They chose to live for extended periods of time under approximately the same conditions of poverty experienced by the neighborhood in which they were located. The settlement workers often emphasized the reciprocal advantages which they thought resulted from the association of persons of different economic and social levels (Bremner, 1956). They were more interested in social reform than in the individual improvement of the poor. They advocated actively for the resolution of specific poverty problems by gathering data and urging the facts relentlessly on reluctant city officials (Levine, 1971).

Although settlement workers came from very different cultural backgrounds, they shared in the interpretation of nature, humanity, and the universe as an organic, interrelated whole. They were motivated by a common belief in the dignity of every person as a member of society, regardless of status, and in the divine possibilities of human fellowship (Woods & Kennedy, 1972). The same philosophical and ethical ideas that stimulated the adoption of Froebel's ideas and the early expansion of the kindergarten in America, inspired others to go out and live with the poor in the slums. For both groups, the child was of supreme importance. Most settlements maintained kindergartens and day nurseries. At the same time, settlement workers were pioneers in establishing and supervising public playgrounds, in addition to the numerous services and activities offered to the adults living in the neighborhood.

An early founder of a settlement kindergarten in 1877 and a proponent of an ethical understanding of the poverty issue was Felix Adler. Born into a Jewish family, he later abandoned all formal religion and founded the Ethical Society in 1876. Adler carried the torch for a "religion of humanity" in the tradition of Emerson into the slums of New York (Beck, 1958). He was also an active advocate of social reform, a member of the State Tenement House Commission and of the National Child Labor Committee. In his philosophical writings, he elaborated his ideas of poverty as an

ethical problem. Poverty was considered evil, not only because of the material privations entailed by it, but, more importantly, because the incessant toil, "wage slavery" Adler called it, prevented the poor from rising to the spiritual interests more appropriate for rational beings. For Felix Adler, the crucial issue was that poverty "is caused by other human beings" (1918, p.45); it is not a divine or natural punishment for low moral standards.

Adler attacked both socialism and social Darwinism as ways of interpreting social dynamics. Both failed to take morality into account, or did so only marginally as an epiphenomenon of social and economic conditions. He also opposed the current practice of charity since "the aim of all charity should be to make those who are dependent on it independent of it...all mere almsgiving, all that so-called charity which only serves to make the dependent classes more dependent, stands condemned" (1883, p.229). Materialistic solutions disregard the spiritual nature in man and are therefore, not only inadequate but ineffective. Adler became convinced "that the ethical principle must run like a golden thread through the whole of a man's life, in a word, that social reform unless inspired by a spiritual view of it...is not social reform in any true sense at all" (1918, p.56).

Felix Adler's ideas were rooted, like Froebel's, in the philosophical idealism of Kant. The Kantian concept of

the moral dignity of man as an end per se, never to be used as a mere tool or thing, is at the foundation of Adler's thought. He differed from Kant, however, in that he rejected the categorical imperative as the a priori moral law, and proposed, instead, the individualization of ethics "which renders possible the correlated unique differences of all the rest" (1918, p.116). He applied the notion of "the enmeshing of one's life in universal life without loss of distinctiveness" (p.119), to direct social action. Adler acted upon his words, "I must help others in order to save myself; I must look upon the other as an ethical unit or moral being in order to become a moral being myself" (p.121).

Adler's work was permeated by a critical view of the American myth of democracy, organized religion, and nationalism. His organic understanding of society resulted in the attribution of guilt to the affluent for the needs of the poor; he stated that "children are dying because I am not dividing my possessions among the poor" (1918, p.184). In opposition to the moralistic or evolutionary rationalizations about the alien nature of the poor, he emphasized the need to see the human and lovable aspect in every person. Most of all, Adler asked for understanding and reverence for the child: "What is it that we are to revere in the child? Its spiritual possibilities, its latent personality. To bring to birth its personality is the supreme educational

end. We show our reverence for the child in the effort to personalize it" (1918, p.295).

All ethical work for social reform had to begin with the children. They were Adler's central preoccupation; "indeed it was a concern for the children...that led to the formation of these [ethical] societies" (1926, p.5). He established settlement houses with kindergartens in Chicago, Philadelphia, and St. Louis. In these free kindergartens, the bodily wants of the slum children were attended, they were washed, dressed, and fed. They were taught how to play and be joyous. By firm, yet mild methods, children were led toward self-respect, the acceptance of the realities of life, and the understanding of the dignity of all human beings regardless of occupation or status. Adler wanted children to learn early on "that there is no shame in doing a lesser service...that all honor accrues to us in doing that function well to which we are committed, and taking pride and finding dignity in its performance" (1881, p.205).

Manual work, the making of objects, both useful and beautiful, was deemed important for all children because of its character building and social virtues;

"let the son of the rich man learn, side by side with the son of the poor man, to labor with his hands; let him thus practically to respect labor; let him learn to understand what the dignity of manual labor really means, and the two classes of society, united at the root, will never thereafter grow asunder" (1893, p.269-270).

The child was seen as the carrier of social reform. Whatever is done to the child will impact the future since "the whole future is already hidden, not yet declared, but latent all the same in the child's heart" (1893, p.5). Thus, early education becomes important for the moral development of both the child and society in general.

The young child's life consisted of growth and play. His duties were the obedience to his parents, the curbing of his temper, and the observance of a few simple rules of health. Moral training began, according to Adler, in the cradle; regularity of sleep and feeding were means of teaching the child to check his impulses: "I do not maintain that regularity itself is moral, but it is favorable to morality because it curbs inclination" (1893, p.49).

Adler maintained that at the age of three, children began acquiring a moral conscience, coinciding with the emergence of the sense of self. Adler recognized explicitly the importance of the environment in the construction of the child's self-image; he was convinced that "it is a mistake to suppose that the idea of selfhood stands off independently from the elements of our environment. The latter enters into, and when they are bad, eat into, the very kernel of our nature" (1893, p.52).

Thus, for Felix Adler, the ravages of poverty meant more than material need during childhood; poverty at an early age signified the deliberate destruction by some of

the very human essence of others during the most vulnerable years of their lives. In his campaign against child labor, Adler proclaimed the sacredness of the child. He maintained "that a child is industrially taboo, that to violate its rights is to touch profanely a holy thing, that it has a soul which must not be blighted for the prospect of mere gain" (quoted in Bremner, 1959, p.228).

Adler had approached the problem of the poor child with the reflections of the philosopher, his contemporary Jacob Riis attacked it with the combativity and the flair of the journalist he was. Riis, an immigrant himself who lived in poverty for years, eventually became a crime reporter for a New York newspaper. In the ghettos of New York, he observed and recorded in photographs and words the suffering and degradation of the urban poor. Riis translated his first-hand experiences into several books calling for social and economic reform. His work later became influential in the enactment of legislation such as the Tenement House Law of 1901. According to S. Cohen (1964), "it was Riis more than anyone else, who fashioned the East Side problem and who formulated the educational solution to that problem" (p.8).

In opposition to the prevalent hereditarianism, Riis was an environmentalist when children were concerned. Heredity, he said, was not so formidable; what made children

bad were the street, the saloon, and the tenement; "the child is a creature of environment, of opportunity, as children are everywhere" (1892/1970, p.2). Riis believed that poor children held the key to society's future: "As we mould [sic] the children of the toiling masses in our cities, so we shape the destiny of the State which they will rule in their turn, taking the rein from our hands" (1892/1970, p.1). To a society which insisted on conceptualizing the child of the poor as qualitatively inferior, even belonging to a lower evolutionary stage, Riis presented a child, who in spite of growing up in the slums, "after all, is not so very different from the rest of us" (1892/1970, p.6). Poor children were not depraved, he insisted; "except as to their clothes and manners, which were the manners of the street, they did not seem very different from a like number of boys in any public school" (p.129). He admired the resilience of those children and found that

"under the rough burr lie undeveloped qualities of good and usefulness, rather, perhaps, of the capacity for them, that crop out in constant exhibitions of loyalty, gratitude, and true-heartedness, a never-ending source of encouragement and delight to those who have made their cause their own and have had in their true sympathy the key to what is best in children" (p.65).

Because Riis knew firsthand how detrimental the squalid circumstances of the slum were, he advocated for early schooling, and public school in general, in order to protect children from the destructive influence of poverty

and, at the same time, to educate and Americanize them (S. Cohen, 1964; Tyack, 1974). Through the children, Riis, like so many others, hoped to reach the older generations; "the little ones, with their new standards and new ambitions, become in a very real sense, missionaries of the slums whose work of regeneration begins with their parents" (1892/1970, p.20). The worst damage was done by the material deprivation that "robs [the child] of the schooling that is his one chance to elude its grasp, by compelling his enrollment in the army of wage-earners before he has learned to read" (1892/1970, p.63).

Riis also believed that poor children needed space and time in order to be able to play. Advocates of child labor often argued that poor children did not know how to play. Riis, on the contrary, described how lustily children played in the streets although usually the police intervened to stop their games since playing ball and flying a kite were generally prohibited by city ordinances. He insisted that playgrounds that "exist only on paper" be actually built by the city. The help of early education was also invoked; "it is the slum that smudges the game too easily, and the kindergarten work comes in helping to wipe off the smut" (1892/1970, p.72).

Riis' The Children of the Poor also focused explicitly, albeit briefly, on the female child, a rare occurrence indeed in the numerous works about children, rich and poor

alike. Riis asked "why [do] we hear so much about the boys and so little of the girls?" He drew an admiring picture of the young girls' life in the slums. Girls started work earlier than boys and worked harder at home and in the factory; they minded the younger siblings, thus freeing their mothers for gainful work. The life of a poor girl was more miserable and less interesting than that of a boy who was frequently turned out of the home at an early age to fend for himself.

In a scheme in which environment is the powerful corrupter, the adult poor is, by definition, corrupted. Parents did not fare well in Riis' analysis. They were chastised for exploiting, beating, and neglecting their children and for failing to protect them from promiscuity, profanity, and vice. In some extreme cases, Riis believed that it was necessary to take children away from the unhealthy environment, even from their own parents. However, Riis also saw the danger of institutional care; "children...cannot be successfully reared in regiments within the narrow rules and the confinement of an asylum, if success is to be measured by the development of individual character" (1892/1970, p.282).

Riis did not limit his plea for children to his books and masterful photographs. He also called for government action to prevent the causes of poverty with the argument that the conditions of poverty made irrelevant the ideals of

citizenship or the moral blandishments of religion (Lane, 1974). In later years, Riis became involved in building tangible institutions for children such as the social settlement that bore his name in the lower East Side of New York.

The effects of poverty on children was also an important concern for Robert Hunter, the author of a classical work on the subject. The brilliant use of statistics in Poverty (1904/1965) stirred up a public controversy and upset public complacency (Chametzky, 1969). Hunter claimed that at least ten million people (out of a population of 82 million) lived in poverty in an apparently prosperous America. And, Hunter added, the majority of the poor were children.

Hunter's chapter on the child was the most harrowing of the book. To those who still considered poverty as a deserved punishment for personal misdeeds, he told about the millions of children "who have neither violated social laws nor committed any sin" and yet have to live in a poverty that is "a monstrous and unnatural thing" (1904/1965, p.191). He stated that

"the curse which poverty lays upon innocent children is an awful one, for it means that they may not grow, that they may not learn, and therefore that they may not be strong enough mentally or physically to overcome the cause of it all, --poverty" (p.216).

Hunter did not place the responsibility of the children's plight on their parents. He considered that poverty demanded so much from the adults that children were necessarily neglected and family life collapsed; "the needs of childhood have been forgotten" (p.204). The one social agency that could save children "from the neglect which the poverty of the parents necessitates" is the school. But educators have, according to Hunter, "isolated themselves from contact with those in poverty" (p.209) and have neglected to make an effort to adapt themselves to "the peculiar needs and abilities of the various classes and nationalities" (p.211).

Play and education, the natural occupations of childhood, were denied to millions of children and, instead, they were sent to work. Hunter, like other reformers of the time, was appalled by the nature and extent of the problem of child labor. It was not the idea of a child working that he found repulsive but the fact that children were exploited for adult profit: "The profit seeking forces are never satisfied and a child at a third of the wages, can take his father's place in many of our present day specialized industries" (p.230). Children had to work in occupations that "dwarf and brutalize" them; millions work twelve hours "in a country which has established in many industries an eight-hour-day for men" (p.232).

Like Felix Adler, Hunter considered the exploitation of children worse than cannibalism since child labor not only destroyed their bodies but also stunted their souls. He hoped for a day when people would realize that

"the child is the world's supreme treasure. For it, the world moves and has its being. Without the child the world were barren, riches but dust, and life joyless. With the child (not mine only, not yours, but every child born to man) the world is forever new, forever hopeful, and forever blessed" (p.259).

The way to usher in that day, affirmed Hunter, was by deciding "to battle with the social or economic forces which are continuously producing recruits [for the destitute classes]" (p.328).

In the course of the chapter on the effects of poverty upon children, Hunter mentioned the great numbers of underfed children in New York. John Spargo, a leader of the Socialist Party and friend and comrade of Hunter, set out to explore the problem further (Chametzky, 1969). In 1906, Spargo published The Bitter Cry of the Children (1906/1969) in which he combined statistical evidence with moral outrage in a blunt and effective style. He wanted to call the attention of his contemporaries to the fact that "this great nation in its commercial madness devours its babes" (p.147).

Like most reformers, Spargo was a believer in the fundamental equality of all human beings. Ignoring the environmental effects on maternal health, a matter of controversy at the time, he stated that "nature starts her children, rich and poor, physically equal,...each generation gets practically a fresh start, unhampered by the diseased and degenerate past" (1906/1969, p.xiv). This extreme assertion was clearly designed to preempt all arguments about the genetic inferiority of the poor. Poverty was defined as a social, not moral or biological, phenomenon, the result of "unbound wealth and luxury...[and] when it assails the cradle it assumes its most hideous form" (p.1). Dismissing genetic and prenatal handicaps, Spargo believed that "we can begin with the child of to-day to make a brighter and nobler to-morrow" (p.9).

Through carefully assembled statistics, Spargo documented the fact that in the United States, there were "two nations within the nation--the nation of the rich and the nation of the poor" (1906/1969, p.64). He found ample evidence of the corresponding divergent views of the child. Spargo mentioned, for example, an elementary school principal, a devoted social Darwinist, who told him that "if you attempt to take hardship and suffering out of their lives by smoothing the pathway of life for these children, you weaken

their character, and, by so doing, you sin against the children themselves and, through them, against society" (p.77).

A similar disparity existed in the area of child labor. For the most part, Americans took it for granted that poor children had to work and assumed that, within reason, it was good for them to do so (Bremner, 1956). These were the years of the Horatio Alger myth and the individualistic faith in opportunity through hard work. The belief in the character building qualities of child labor could be upheld only if the concrete circumstances were deliberately ignored. Even a recent study (Zelizer, 1985) takes a rather superficial look at the issue and fails to take into account the widespread exploitation of children that motivated the protests of pre-World War I reformers. Very few were opposed to the traditional work of children in the context of their family occupations. Already Froebel had urged parents to involve children in everyday chores and found moral and educational virtues in children's work. But the social conditions that made the family a productive unit in towns and farms had ceased to exist in the urban slum. It was neither parental greed nor ignorance of the increasing sacralization of childhood that sent young children to factories and sweatshops, but the social forces that determined poverty.

On the other hand, child-labor legislation advocates and its opponents often pointed to the parents as the instigators of child labor. The latter insisted upon the hardships that parents would have to endure if children were prevented from working while the former accused lazy parents as the exploiters. Spargo noted that both arguments underestimated the devastating influence of poverty and ignored the helplessness and need of the family itself.

The emphasis on parental exploitation seemingly justified the social reformers' intervention in removing children from the family and transferring them to the care of social institutions. Lasch (1977) argued that the conceptualization of the child as a social responsibility by the progressive reformers contributed to the deterioration of the family by undermining its authority.

Indeed, the child was defined by Spargo as society's greatest responsibility. He affirmed, however, that all palliative measures adopted by society to relieve the symptoms of poverty are only partial and temporary solutions to the problems of the child and the family. As a socialist, he believed in the need of fundamental change and "the right of every child born into the world to equal opportunity and equal share in all the gifts and resources of civilization" (1906/1969, p.221).

The young reformers of the settlement movement shared Spargo's view of the social origins of poverty. They were convinced that the most profound damage to children was caused by industrialization's shattering of human associations and the alienation it left in its wake (Cremin, 1964). Settlement workers did not pitch parents against children but sought the humanization of industrial civilization as a means of achieving better conditions for the family as a whole.

Probably the most influential settlement worker was Jane Addams. She considered herself "sort of a socialist" (Levine, 1971), and her concern for the poor was determined by a vision of social justice that transcended her immediate Chicago neighborhood. Among those close to Addams were Julia Lathorp, first head of the Children's Bureau, Florence Kelly, who worked to enact child labor legislation, Grace Abbott, later to succeed Lathorp, Colonel F. W. Parker, and John Dewey.

Addams, like her friend Felix Adler, called for a reassessment of the ethical standards by which society was ruled. A new formulation of democratic beliefs ought to result in action, "thus the identification with the common lot which is the essential idea of Democracy becomes the source and expression of social ethics" (1907, p.11). She was aware of the double standard which the more affluent classes applied to the working class and the poor. While

the philanthropist sought out the "worthy" individuals, the social reformer agitated for all the poor. Addams noted that "the philanthropist still finds his path much easier than do those who are attempting a social morality" (1907, p.175).

The public school was a frequent target for Addams' criticism (Graham, 1967). She believed that schools had not yet adapted to the realities and needs of the children of poverty; many children left school prematurely, but even if they remained there, they were only trained in monotonous achievements similar to the demands of factory life. Jane Addams asked: "Has our commercialism been so strong that our schools have become insensibly commercialized, whereas we supposed that our industrial life was receiving the broadening and illuminating effects of the schools?" (1907, p.190).

Implicit in Addams' indictment of "the businessman dictating the curriculum for the worker's child," was her faith in the equality and sacredness of all children. Almost all the advocates of early childhood education had located the causes of poverty within the individual (Ross, 1979); the settlement movement, on the other hand, addressed poverty as a problem of democracy. Dewey himself felt that his faith in democracy took on a sharper and deeper meaning because of Hull House (the settlement house founded by Addams in Chicago) and Jane Addams (Cremin, 1964).

In The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets (1909), Addams expressed her concern about the perception of the child when this child belongs to the poor; she observed that,

"for the first time they are being prized more for their labor power than for their innocence, their tender beauty, their ephemeral gaiety. Society cares more for the products they [the children] manufacture than for their immemorial ability to reaffirm the charm of existence" (p.5).

In contrast, she emphasized through many examples the devotion of the poor to their children. She wrote about "workingmen who year after year spend all their wages upon the nurture and education of their children" (1909, p.31).

Social regeneration will be achieved, according to Addams, through education; "the tender tissue and newly awakened emotions must be made repository for the historic ideals and dogmas" (1909, p.156). Since church and school had failed to nurture the spiritual growth of the child, Jane Addams decided in 1905 to take the National Education Association to task for not adopting a stronger position in favor of the children of the poor and against child labor (Curti, 1935).

Addams herself established a kindergarten in Hull House at the time of its opening and, in 1898, erected a Children's Building for the special use of the neighborhood children. According to Vanderwalker (1908) it was "a model

of beauty and convenience" while it gave "an insight into child life in large cities" (p.112).

Lillian Wald described her work among the poor in The House on Henry Street (1915). Like Addams whose friend she was, Wald believed that children "carried on their shoulders our hopes for a finer, more democratic America" (1915, p.66). She saw it as society's responsibility to protect the children of the poor "from premature burdens, to prolong their childhood and their period of growth" (p.133); children need to be children and play before they share "the experiences, anxieties, and tragedies of the adult" (p.74). In order to provide adequate conditions for play, which she considered the natural activity of childhood, Wald established a playground in the backyard of the settlement house, the first playground in the New York city slums. This marked a great change in attitude toward children and "the recognition of the child's right to play, as an integral part of his claim upon the state" (p.96).

Meanwhile the philanthropic kindergarten flourished. Its image of poverty was that of individual deficit and their goal was "the moral salvation of neglected childhood" (Vanderwalker, 1908, p.68). The kindergarten was adopted by church and temperance (anti-alcoholism) workers to disseminate their respective messages. The number of such kindergartens grew prodigiously but their spirit was akin to

charity. According to S. Cohen (1964), teachers went out to the slums to impose, in a not particularly subtle way, the middle-class standards of cleanliness and good manners (Cohen, 1964). Shapiro (1983) remarked that "reaching the urban family had become a priority of free [philanthropic] kindergartners, a curious blend of romantic enrichment and environmental compensation" (p.99).

Eventually, the philanthropic kindergarten had to face criticisms for their individualistic understanding of Froebel in the context of poverty and children. Vander-walker (1908) reported that, on one occasion,

"Miss Jane Addams told the kindergartners...that if Froebel were to come back to earth he would be distinctly disappointed to find the kindergartners so largely occupied with children only, since his is a theory of life, and not of child education alone. The follower of Froebel who is not making the kindergarten a center for neighborhood work has not, in Miss Addams' judgment, grasped the whole significance of Froebel's doctrine" (p.111).

Many progressive reformers and educators had, through decades of writing and action, arrived at an understanding of the child as indissolubly tied to the society into which he is born, and, as such, the child is conceptualized as both its hope and its responsibility. Society was conceived as an organic whole in which all the members shared in equal humanity. The child, while deserving special consideration given his helplessness and plasticity, did not possess for

the reformer the visionary characteristics attributed to him by Romanticism. The child was seen as human, social, and as the embodiment of the future; thus, children became the patrimony of society in general, rather than the sole responsibility of the family.

This view of the child resulted in the gradual weakening of parental authority, the increased encroachment of professional expertise, solicited and unsolicited, upon the natural childrearing abilities of parents, and the downward expansion of schooling. The intervention of the state on behalf of children was undoubtedly a manifestation of public concern but also an expression of the assumption that parents had failed their children (Grubb & Lazerson, 1982).

The examination of the early manifestations of public intervention in the life of the family by philanthropists and reformers revealed some of the intrinsic ambiguities in the definition of the child. Children are seen as precious, but also as expendable, damaged, deficient in some element, be it health, environment, education. The conclusion, however, is basically one: children and families need help. Reformers decided that the best way of providing that help to children was to advocate for more fundamental measures to change social conditions. The philanthropists, on the other hand, tried to change the

individual child, or his parents, one person at the time. The dilemma is still alive.

Poverty as an issue became relatively submerged until the political circumstances of the 1960s produced a reawakening of the realization that it still existed in the land of affluence. There was a certain parallelism to the atmosphere of the turn of the century. Statistics again revealed the reality of massive numbers of children in poverty. Again there was the perception of the "otherness" of the poor; the central and southern Europeans had been replaced by the black, the Puerto Rican, the Mexican. Again the young child was conceptualized as "the carrier of the dream" (de Lone, 1979) and as the solution to poverty as a social problem. But the focus had changed; the concern now was not so much for the moral and spiritual child, but rather for his cognitive and academic abilities.

The interest in "the culture of the poor" applied to children and child-rearing practices, can be traced back at least to the 1940s (Chilman, 1966). Numerous studies demonstrated then that lower-class families tended to raise their children and conduct their family relationships in a way quite different from the middle-class style. Middle-class attitudes toward children were observed to be more likely to lead to favorable outcomes; a conclusion that

might be viewed as circular since the standards were originally derived from middle-class values.

A cultural explanation of poverty led to a conceptualization of the poor as essentially different. It affirmed that poverty behavior is not caused by, but is the determinant of, the low socio-economic status of the poor. On the other hand, a situational understanding of poverty analyzed the statistically unique patterns of behavior of the poor as deriving from the external circumstances which forced them to occupy an unfavorable position in a restrictive social structure (Waxman, 1983).

Hunter (1904/1965) held a situational view of poverty; in its most succinct formulation, he saw poverty as the lack of an adequate income. But this was not the prevalent view of the War on Poverty. Although President Johnson put income guarantees high on his list in 1967, the idea never gained the broad support it needed to become legislation and the Economic Opportunities Act did not address the problem of inadequate income at all.

The War on Poverty chose to work with the individualistic, cultural view of poverty. This resulted from a political necessity; in the 1960s, a majority of people still considered success as a triumph of the will and a reflection of ability, although many, mostly Democrats, admitted that circumstances could be a factor (Gallup poll held in 1964, in Will & Vatter, 1970). Consequently,

education was chosen over social reform as a solution to poverty. Zigler and Anderson (1979) pointed out that the Kennedy and Johnson administrations preferred the cultural explanations of poverty since they would not disturb the consciences much less the pocketbooks of middle-class Americans. The educational goal of the War on Poverty was to change the "subcultural" patterns of the poor by providing cognitive "enrichment", thus, presumably, opening to all the doors of the Great Society.

The studies of poverty written during the 1960s presented a bleak view of the low-income family and the quality of nurturance it provided. With a total theoretical disregard of society as a "macro" environment, they viewed the "micro" environment of the family as the determinant factor in children's development (de Lone, 1979). Therefore, considerable efforts were spent to remediate parental deficiencies. Parent participation in Head Start was encouraged from the beginning, not because parents were expected to have anything to contribute but because they could "learn something about how to bring up children, and about nutrition, as well as education in general" (S. Shriver, in Zigler, 1979, p.53). The isolated attempt to empower parents for community action as exemplified by the Child Development Group of Mississippi found itself without renewed funding after only one year of successful operation.

The corollary of an "environmentalism run amok" (Zigler, 1979) was the idea of the almost limitless plasticity of the child, damaged by a "culturally deprived" environment but who, through appropriate influences, could be cast in any mold. The result of intervention was expected to benefit both individuals and society not immediately but at sometime in the future. This is what de Lone (1979) called "the dream deferred." The liberal view, then, defined poor adults as inept, poor children as deprived, and the middle-class expert as the person who held the key to everybody's future.

Poor children were described in a consistently pejorative way. They were seen as psychologically depressed and immature, lacking ego-strength and goal commitment, impulsive, with a low frustration tolerance, prone to magical thinking. One study described the poor child as one

"who relates to authority rather than rationale, who may often be compliant but is not reflective in his behavior, and for whom the consequences of an act are largely considered in terms of immediate punishment or reward rather than future effects and long range goals (Godland, Klein, & Novotney, 1973, p.45).

The implication was, naturally, that affluent children would act in exactly the opposite way.

In 1962, Riessman published a benevolent study of the "culturally deprived child" which contributed to coin the expression. His view was grounded in the cultural perspective on poverty and his notion of the poor abounded in

negatives. He saw the poor child as "not pleased with his situation in life...grappling with the problems in his life" (p.24), "not open to reason,...not attracted to middle-class style of life...prejudiced and intolerant...anti-intellectual" (p.27-28). Although benign, it was not a positive picture of the child. For Riessman, poor children had a "hidden IQ", "a human smartness," (p.62) instead of the intelligence of the middle-class child. They were seen as "down to earth, spontaneous," "not introspective," (p.71) and as operating on "a different wave length" (p.72).

The research of the time concluded that poor children were non-verbal and/or linguistically inarticulate. Although later studies conceded that "their spontaneous language seems to be more developed than might be expected" (Riessman, 1962, p.76), it was still believed that the young poor "are sorely lacking in advanced linguistic form" (p.82). These descriptions resulted in the image of the poor child as handicapped and seriously damaged.

Programs based on individualistic conceptions of the problem they seek to remedy, frequently increase inequality instead of decreasing or erasing it. Head Start, for example, has often been criticized for labeling children as "deficient" or "deprived" and for separating children along socioeconomic lines before they even entered school (Valentine, Ross, & Zigler, 1979). This contributed to what Waxman (1983) calls the "stigmatization" of the individual,

a diminishing of his or her humanity, a reduction of the whole human being to the tainted characteristics.

Not all social scientists who studied poverty subscribed to the image of "the deprived child." Robert Coles (1967) was among the early critics of the pejorative descriptions of the low-income child. He described ghetto children as loyal, sharp and critical, delightfully energetic, and as speakers of a strong and expressive language. But ghetto childhood is short and swift and children grow old before they grow up. Coles attributed the fault not to the child but to a social system that does not provide full employment and the economic means for a dignified life.

Ginsburg (1972) also aimed at dispelling "the myth of the deprived child." Through a Piagetian evaluation of poor children's cognitive development, Ginsburg concluded that the social-class differences in cognition are relatively superficial. He did, however, discover significant differences in the content and patterns of poor children's thought, findings that he considered true also for ethnic groups regardless of income. He affirmed categorically that poor children did not suffer from massive deficiencies of mind; on the contrary, they develop powerful intellectual skills despite an apparently deprived environment.

Lewis (1978) pointed out the dangers inherent in the attention paid to the so-called culturally disadvantaged in the educational system:

"The teachers have all attended the school systems's in-service training sessions, were they have been taught that disadvantaged children may not be interested in learning because they come from homes in which the benefits of education are not fully appreciated, where they are taught that disadvantaged children are likely to present behavior problems because they are influenced by a subculture in which physical aggression and violence are commonplace. The teachers of the "disadvantaged" are indeed well prepared for them--well prepared, that is, to expect the worst from them." (p.162-163).

Elkind (1979) added his voice to the criticism of the myth of deprivation when he pointed to social scientists as "guilty, during the last decade, of creating new stereotypes of low-income people that are every bit as pernicious as some of the earlier 'poor people' stereotypes" (p.192).

A further criticism of the War on Poverty's view of the child was expressed by Grubb and Lazerson (1982). These authors compared the ethical or humanitarian view with what they call the instrumental conception of children. In an instrumental interpretation, the welfare of the child is relevant only insofar as it will benefit the state. The development of formal methods of evaluating the effectiveness of schools and intervention programs like Head Start has reinforced this way of thinking about children. Head Start survived only, according to these authors, because its advocates were successful in finding an instrumental justification of the program in the evidence of cognitive gains.

Educational and non-educational (health, nutrition) programs for children have been and are justified in terms of future outcomes rather than on moral and humanitarian grounds: malnourished children are unacceptable because they may suffer brain damage and then become future dependents of the state, not because of "the immorality of malnutrition in a land of plenty" (Grubb & Lazerson, 1982, p.55-56).

The cost effective view of children's programs prevents the funding of measures whose outcome is uncertain or too "soft" to put in hard data. Programs designed to make children's lives more enjoyable or richer are a private luxury accessible only to more affluent families; "in the public realm, we do not value children very highly; we care only for the adults who have grown up 'right,' and we focus all programs on that future" (Grubb & Lazerson, 1982, p.58).

CHAPTER VI

THE SCIENTIFIC CHILD

THE IDEA OF THE CHILD IN THORNDIKE, WATSON, AND SKINNER

Psychology as an experimental science originated in the decades around the turn of the century, the result of a combination of evolutionary theory, quantitative data, and statistical methodology. Edward Lee Thorndike set, at that time, the pattern of experimental research that dominates the field to this date. The extrapolation of data from the controlled manipulation of animal behavior was the basis for generalizations on behavior in general, including human behavior (Steinberg, 1980).

Thorndike was also among the first to write about the importance of understanding the learner in order to shape his learning efficiently. Initially, Thorndike intended to demonstrate that science could improve the practice of education; somewhat later he decided that educational goals, too, could be scientifically determined (Cremin, 1964). Due in part to Curti's (1935) searing indictment of Thorndike's conservative ideology, his name has been largely forgotten, but his influence on the conception of human nature and the process of education has been lasting and pervasive. American education has not yet shaken the belief that "any alleged knowledge which can be expressed in figures is in fact as final and exact as the figures in which it is expressed" (Hofstadter, 1963, p.339).

Thorndike, rather than G. Stanley Hall, stood at the beginning of a qualitatively new view of the child. With him, and for several decades afterwards, the child's soul ceased to be a topic of educational thought; the quantifiable child was born, the subject of science, not of philosophy. The positivistic psychology promoted by William James at the end of the 19th century had already severed its links with philosophy. While James later chose to return to philosophical issues, the experimentalists had no desire to include the philosophical dimension.

Thorndike, and later J. B. Watson, were examples of this attitude. Although both had had considerable contact with philosophers, both doubted the value of philosophy (Lerner, 1983). Thorndike wrote in 1903:

"It is the vice or the misfortune of thinkers about education to have chosen the methods of philosophy or of popular thought instead of those science. We ruminate over the ideas of Pestalozzi or Herbart or Froebel as if writing a book a hundred years ago proved a man inspired" (1903a, p.164)

The seemingly permanent divorce between psychology and philosophy lasted until philosophical questions were addressed again in the field of psychology in the 1950s. The scientific image of the child, however, still survives almost untouched, in the minds of many teachers, parents, and policy makers.

Scientific psychology in its rationalism, was born as a revolt against the Romantic glorification of emotions,

introspection, and the wholeness of the human experience. Positive science, by methodological necessity, produced the fragmentation of the child and provided only glimpses of isolated aspects of her life and development.

A rigorous approach to childhood emerged, determined by the scientific method, in which only those aspects were studied that could be accurately measured, or so it was assumed, and statistically evaluated. There was an optimistic belief in the possibility of developing a science of learning and behavior and a technology of education that would result in the efficient development of optimal individuals. This was the era of mental measurement, achievement tests, laws of learning, and, eventually, behavioral objectives and teaching machines. Science was assumed to be the tool for the acquisition of all there is to know about the child without a need for philosophical or ethical constructs. These assumptions survive today to a larger degree in education than in developmental psychology.

G. S. Hall had perceived the need to know the child-in-general and the Child Study movement he established intended to provide this understanding through scientific methods. In practice, however, Hall's questionnaires lacked rigor and the results were speculative. Hall himself lost faith in experimental psychology in the 1890s. Siegel and White (1982) speculated that Hall may have seen in genetic

psychology something broader than experimental psychology and a sounder foundation for educational psychology.

It was left to Thorndike to develop a scientific educational psychology on the quantitative basis of the natural sciences. Thorndike stated that "the science of education when it develops will like other sciences rest upon direct observations of and experiments on the influence of educational institutions and methods made and reported with quantitative precision" (1903a, p.164). He was convinced that the statistical method would prevail because he believed that "we conquer the facts of nature when we observe and experiment upon them. When we measure them we have made them our servants. A little statistical insight trains them for invaluable work" (1903a, p.164).

The subject chosen by Thorndike for his dissertation (1898) was the problem-solving ability of cats and chicken. With his well-controlled experiments on animal learning, he inaugurated the objective, nonintrospective study of human nature (Curti, 1980). As a Darwinian, he did not doubt that his findings on animal learning could be applied also to the education of children. Thorndike concluded that "the best way with children may often be in the pompous words of the animal trainer, 'to arrange everything in connection with the trick so that the animal will be compelled by the laws of his own nature to perform it'" (1898, p.105). To Hall's faith in recapitulation and natural development, Thorndike

responded that "we ought to make an effort, as [Nature] does, to omit the useless and antiquated and get to the best and most useful as soon as possible; we ought to change what is to what ought to be, as far as we can" (1898, p.105).

In 1900, Thorndike pursued his experimental studies at Teachers College. As scientific subjects, he wanted to get "some ants, earthworms, sharks and amblystoma larvae, also toads! I also want some crazy people and some school-children" (quoted in Joncich, 1968, p.229-230). As it turned out, Thorndike worked with three monkeys that year; he studied their mental life in order "to relieve human mentality from its isolation and see its real relationships with other forms" (1901, p.57). As a conclusion of that research, Thorndike stated that "the only demonstrable advance of man" over the primates was "the change from a few, narrowly confined, practical associations to a multitude of all sorts" (p.57). An understanding of intelligence as behavior appropriate to the situation and the dismissal of the role of ideas in human learning, permitted Thorndike to apply the conclusions from the study of animals to the study of human intelligence.

Much later, in 1940, Thorndike observed that "it is true that animals do not reason in the sense that the word was used in 1900, but neither does man...man forms mental connections just as animals do; but he forms an enormously greater number of such" (1940/1969, p.135). To the associa-

tionist, animals and children were the "imperfect adults," and their apparent simplicity seemed to offer clues to the complexity of human behavior.

If intelligence is the sum of associative processes, then there is no hiatus in the continuity of mind from the animal to the human; a simple increase of the number, delicacy, and complexity of associations gave rise to inference and reason, the characteristics of the human mind (Joncich, 1968). In this progression the adult intelligence, especially that of the gifted individual, is the crowning achievement. One element that gets lost in this model is, among others, the significance of childhood.

Thorndike reacted explicitly against the Froebelian reverence of childhood and broke completely with the sentimental view of the child (Joncich, 1968). Although most of Thorndike's work focused on the older child, he addressed early childhood education teachers in 1903 in order to offer his idea of what this education should be. The attack on Froebelianism is transparent. Thorndike recommended that education should "suit the body of a child, not the mind of a mystic" (1903b, p.67), an allusion to kindergarten symbolism. The young child is, first and foremost, a body that needs to be healthy and ready for future intellectual and moral endeavors. He mocked Froebel's spiritual understanding of the child, when he

suggested that the first gift of the child should be a toothbrush, and the first occupation, sleep.

The young child, in Thorndike's view, had a limited repertoire of associations, therefore he could be easily over-stimulated by a relative lack of purely physical play and a relative abundance of indoor life with toys, stories, school work. It is better, affirmed Thorndike, for a four-year-old "to be left to himself in a backyard for three hours daily than to attend a type of class which will deprive him of proper physical play and rest, keep him constantly on the qui vive emotionally, and add to his burden from an already over-rich environment" (1903b, p.49).

For Thorndike, the life of the mind was connected to the contraction of the muscles. The immature mind of the young child thrived on large muscle activities such as games of pursuit and strength, of search and collection. These "give enough stimulus to the independence, pugnacity of the solid type, courage, and to what we call the manly virtues of childhood" (p.54).

Thorndike rejected terms such as "soul," "personality," "spiritual nature" in the context of the definition of human nature. He considered life as "a bundle of habits" (p.54); the education of young children should consist in a gradual building up of positive habits on the substratum of native tendencies or instincts. He exhorted teachers to

learn about instincts, not in order to follow them, as Hall would recommend, but "to lead them" (p.53). Therefore, the establishment of habits, especially in the early stages of childhood, needed to be accompanied by inhibitory activities.

"If we take from Froebel the analogy of the growth of the mind to that of the plant, we may say that rigid pruning is the absolute prerequisite of sturdy growth and well developed fruit. Indeed it may be that in the proper haste to escape from the illogical and cheerless doctrine that whatever is hard and disagreeable is especially educative, modern parents and teachers have approached dangerously near to weak submission to whatever is in childhood is right...we should not entice and fool children out of bad habits when straightforward inhibition is the honest and economical course" (1903b, p.61).

This passage is remarkable for the clarity with which it expressed the view of early childhood as a relatively mindless period, a preparation for the achievements of later childhood and adulthood. It also proclaimed the superiority of the adult and the cost-efficient understanding of education.

Thorndike systematized his ideas about education in Educational Psychology (1903/1914), a single-volume text in its first edition and later expanded, used by generations of students at Teachers' College. In it, Thorndike combined his theory on human nature and the laws of learning he had derived from experimentation. He believed that this knowledge could "change the world, including man himself,

for the better" (1914, p.1), an optimistic view of the uses of psychology, expressed again, almost in the same words by B. F. Skinner several decades later.

Human nature is made up of "original tendencies" or "man's unlearned equipment," a long list of individual and social responses or instincts. Wants, interests, and motives are the basis for the original "satisfiers" and "annoyers." They are also "the ultimate source of all values" (1914, p.50). Play is not considered an instinct: "the majority of the original tendencies from which human play develops are not peculiar to play, but originate serious activities as well" (p.67). On the other hand, the capacity to learn is counted as "the most important fact of nature" (p.70). The idea of learning is expressly dissociated from such "mystical powers" as attention, memory, reasoning, or choice. Neither is it related to the theory of imitation as a mental function or the ideo-motor hypothesis of William James. Learning is a matter of a situation (later, stimulus) and a response connected by a bond.

Thorndike took a controversial stand for the time, in his interpretation of "original tendencies." He considered it "evident that original nature includes tendencies that are good, tendencies that can be used for good, and tendencies that had best be abolished" (p.116). Only "sentimentalists, absolute philosophers and believers in a distorted and fallacious form of the doctrine of evolution"

would hold that nature is always right. As an answer to G. S. Hall's recapitulationist "Nature is Right" doctrine, Thorndike stated that "the original tendencies of man have not been right, are not right, and probably never will be right. Only one thing in it is unreservedly good, the power to make it better" (p.124).

In an interventionist model of human development, childhood possesses none of the unique characteristics attributed to it by the Romantics. In contrast to Froebel and Hall, there are no flesh and blood children behind Thorndike's theories. Siegel and White (1982) pointed out the contrasting notions of the child of these theories when they noted that those who viewed education as management and guidance of aggregates of distant children needed symbols that represented the status and performance of the aggregate child. Those who worked with real children, on the other hand, needed "what one might reasonably call myths of childhood...To this end child study had to encompass things other than the quantitative technologies elaborated in Thorndike's educational psychology" (p.278).

Thorndike's statistical approach to human nature resulted in the quantification of individual differences. This was a topic of central importance, and the elaboration of its consequences filled Thorndike's later years. After weighing such variables as sex, race, remote ancestry, near ancestry, maturity, environment, Thorndike affirmed that

"men have different amounts of capacity," and that "in the actual race of life...the chief determining factor is heredity" (1903/1914, p.399). Since he believed that these differences could be accurately measured, it was possible, in Thorndike's view, to implement an education that would fit the varying talents and capacities of the students. That there was a value judgment implicit in his apparently objective studies did not escape Thorndike's biographer. Joncich (1968) saw the Protestant-Calvinistic belief in the Elect in a secularized form in Thorndike's understanding of individual differences; "those who inherit the genes for easy and rapid learning are saved, those with limited propensities to form new constructions are, in an educated and changing society, the Damned" (p.332).

Thorndike was not alone in his belief of an inherited, fixed, and measurable entity called intelligence. The introduction of the measurement of children's specific achievements and the massive testing of adult army recruits during World War I, was the work of Terman, Yerkes, and others besides Thorndike. He shared with the other hereditarians the view that capacity is not affected by environment; "each person possesses apart from all influence certain inner tendencies which it is out of the power of education to create or destroy" (quoted in Forest, 1927, p.195). Schools, then, were not there to provide an education which assumes growth and development, but only a

scientifically designed training in order to achieve specific changes.

Egalitarians who hoped America's democracy would be realized through education, received the hereditarian theory of mental ability as a shock (Joncich, 1968). The individuality of the child was assessed now, not to discover how best to develop his unique strengths, as had been Binet's intentions (Gould, 1981), but to streamline and maximize the efficiency of the educational system. Thorndike had criticized the public schools for years for planning their programs with "a total disregard of hereditary mental differences between the classes and the masses" (1903a, p.2). Moreover, Thorndike recommended that a nation's educational resources should be used first to aid young men and women whom nature and nurture have chosen to profit from schooling; in a literate, technological society the efficient use of the above-average intellect should become the first priority.

Thorndike's elitism became even more outspoken in his work on Human Nature and the Social Order (1940/1969). In it, he affirmed that "equality gained at the price of quality would be a very bad bargain" (p.314). In his new role of social engineer, he advocated a life-long differential treatment for the gifted "as an insurance against lack of use of these precious resources" (p.32). In his mechanistic model of society, the individual is seen as

passive and subject to conditioning. Society will shape him, like the part of a machine, to fit and function in the proper place assigned to him through scientific methods; "man is a physical mass and behaves in accordance to physical laws" (1940/1969, p.4).

Thorndike's view of education as specific training was an important result of his fragmentation of the image of the child. Around the turn of the century, the question of the transfer of training became a matter of debate. With the decline of faculties psychology, the idea of education as mental discipline was losing favor. Thorndike believed that he could find out, through experiments, if transfer of training took place and, in that way, settle the controversy. Although, as Hofstadter (1963) pointed out, the evidence proved contradictory and although Thorndike cautioned his readers about it (Weber, 1984), his studies "shattered time-honored assumptions about the 'disciplinary' value of certain studies and thereby accelerated utilitarian tendencies already gaining the schools" (Cremin, 1964, p.113).

Most of Thorndike's influence was limited to the elementary and secondary school; nevertheless, the specific training of certain habits became the desired goal for some early childhood educators through the work of Patty Smith Hill. She had been interested in the ideas of Hall and Dewey, but found direction for the restructuring of the

kindergarten in Thorndike's ideas about the specificity of learning. She worked on establishing behavioral goals for early childhood education in terms that would be measurable "in closer accord with the standards of present day psychology" (quoted in Snyder, 1972, p.265). Originally a Froebelian, she harbored ambivalent feelings about the strictures imposed on the young child by standardized educational aims in spite of her wish to modernize kindergarten education.

An unambiguous criticism of mental and achievement tests came from Margaret Naumburg (1928). She recognized the dangers inherent in the reification of intelligence: "I feel that the psychologists who point with pride to their index of intelligence are like those indefatigable fishermen who stock a lake with unhatched fish and return later to the selfsame pools, hooking those very fish, and then cry out, 'Look at the wonderful fish we have discovered!'" (1928, p.129). Naumburg decried the vast influence the quantitative view had on the conceptualization of the child:

"Instead of helping to build up human beings by uncovering the variation or special needs of their type, these tests tend to break them down. Uniformity of classification into age groupings--into inferior, average, and superior abilities--these ignore the special quality, the individuality and creative power that are unique to each person and not the habit of the mass" (1928, p.131)

The fragmentation of the child that underlies experimental psychology was vividly expressed by Naumburg when she said that psychologists and educators look at children "like the

child who plucks the wings of a fly, they prefer dead parts to a living whole" (1928, p.132).

The child remained a collection of statistical data in Thorndike's vast work. Young children came alive, on the other hand, in John Broadus Watson's case studies and in his advice to parents and teachers. His views would have a persistent, and even insidious, influence on the American parents' view of the child until Benjamin Spock was able to break the behaviorist's grip (Hardyment, 1983) in the 1950s.

Watson announced in 1912, the birth of behaviorism, a radical, albeit premature, break with existing psychology, made more strident by the brash outspokenness of its founder. In Kessen's (1965) words, "Watson...shook the house of psychology to its foundations and, along the way, invented a new kind of child" (p.228).

As a matter of fact, Thorndike had already prepared the way for behaviorism. It was Thorndike who had considered consciousness as a mystical concept unproductive in scientific research and had dismissed introspection as a method. He had already replaced ethical and philosophical goals in education with measurable objectives and cost-efficiency considerations. Also, Thorndike had asked for and already worked on the assumptions of an exact and experimental science of behavior for more than a decade by the time of Watson's pronouncement.

Nevertheless, Watson had the gift of bluntness; he worked with clearly defined concepts and he made his conclusions simple. Psychology would work with the rigorous methods of natural science only on observable facts; introspection was declared methodologically useless. The goal of psychology was the prediction and control of behavior. Animals and humans are the subjects of psychological studies; the behaviorist does not recognize a dividing line between them;

"a man to the behaviorist is a whole animal...a mammal, a primate, a two-legged animal with two arms and two delicate, mobile hands; an animal that has nine months of embryonic life, a long helpless infancy, a slow developing childhood..." (1925, p.294).

Watson, like Thorndike, began his experimental career working with animals; his dissertation on Animal Education was completed in 1903; his subjects had been white rats. But soon, Watson added the experimental study of babies to his rat-maze research on the nature of learning. In newborn human babies, Watson believed he would be able to observe bits of behavior still simple enough to be described in terms of stimulus and response. He also hoped to be able to discover in infants those responses that supposedly belong to the original behavioral equipment.

Babies, like animals, were good subjects because they did not distract the researcher with unnecessary talk. Besides, Watson enjoyed babies. After the birth of his

first child, he wrote that "a baby is more fun to the square inch than all the rats and frogs in creation! Honest" (quoted in Cohen, 1979). In the studies of infants, Watson theorized that babies are born with just three unconditioned reflexes, fear, rage, and love, all of which were subject to later conditioning. But he also observed that "[babies] begin to learn to do things--that is, become conditioned--the day they are born" (1928a, p.21).

Watson opposed Thorndike's belief on the inheritance of capacity, talent, temperament, and mental constitution; "differences in structure and differences in early training will account for all differences in later behavior" (1924, p.79). And he added: "I would feel perfectly confident in the ultimately favorable outcome of careful upbringing of a healthy, well-formed baby born to a long line of crooks, murderers, and thieves" (p.82).

For Watson, the human being at birth was "a very lowly piece of protoplasm, ready to be shaped by any family in whose care it is first placed" (1928a, p.28). The infant is born with random movements, "squirmings", some of which are taken up and developed into personalized patterns and other disappear, according to the environment the child is born into. There is no development, strictly speaking, in the behaviorist's child but an increasingly complex combination of the original elements. This growth of organizational complexity is, in theory, life-long; in practice it

usually stops around thirty only because "most people have become too well fed to learn" (1928a, p.117). The idea that the child developed from within "is a doctrine of mystery ...the behaviorists believe that there is nothing from within to develop" (1928b, p.40).

Infancy and early childhood were enormously important "given the limitless plasticity at the start" (1928a, p.42). Watson stated categorically that "one can make or break the child so far as his personality is concerned before the age of five is reached...by the end of the second year the pattern of the future individual is already laid down" (quoted in Forest, 1927, p.204). According to Watson, the child has to learn early about the behavior of both his striped (striated) and his unstriped (unstriated) muscles. "Society very early got our striped muscles under its control...[it] has taught reading and writing and arithmetic--and Heavens knows what else--to our striped muscles" (p.47) but no educational efforts have been directed to organize the emotions, located according to Watson in the human "gut." The affirmative answer to the self-posed question "Can the gut be taught?" was the basis of his theory of emotions as conditioned responses of the unstriated muscles. A child likes candy because he is conditioned, like a Pavlovian dog, to enjoy it. But in "the unconditioned child emotional behavior is a very simple matter; the simple process of conditioning is quite sufficient to

account for the genesis and growth of all emotional complexity. The home is the laboratory where the complexity is built in" (1928a, p.56-57).

The genesis of thought was explained in similar terms. For the behaviorist, thought was nothing but internalized or "laryngeated" speech. Thinking was located in "the muscles of the larynx, throat, and chest...any interference there--even a bad sore throat--slows up the thinking process" (1928a, p.84-85). Action, not reflection, improved thinking; in behavioristic terms, "overt behavior determines implicit behavior...the new things in the universe come from the doers--the chemist, the physicist, the engineer, the biologist, the business man" (p.86), and, to educators he recommended that "we ought to have workshops of every description rather than textbooks" (p.91).

Verbalization was equated by the behaviorist to the consciousness of introspective psychology and the unconscious, to the large un verbalized part of experience, "the activity of the unstriped [unstriated] muscles." The world of infancy "which is totally un verbalized for the first year and practically un verbalized until the end of the second year" (1928a, p.101) was considered akin to the unconscious. With this formulation, Watson tried to provide the behavioral answer to Freud, whose theory he called "voodooism" and whose scientific method he considered "on a par with the miracles of Jesus" (p.94-95). Mother fixation was nothing

else than a bad habit instilled by an "unscientific mother" (p.102). How to treat it? Not through analysis but through "unconditioning and retraining" (p.103): "You can build up a whole string of emotional reactions, then tear them down... you can implant, alter, and wholly change vocational patterns, and all without any psychoanalytical patter!" (p.109).

Although the pedagogical implications of his theory were interspersed throughout his writings, Watson decided to write a child-rearing book of advice for parents, Psychological Care of Infant and Child (1928b). It met with an enormous and quite unexpected success; the public apparently felt in desperate need for psychological expertise. Cohen (1979) remarked that, in a world in which science seemed to make everything possible, there was very little of the skepticism with which experts are received today. The Children's Bureau and the Department of Health adopted Watson's ideas and disseminated them widely in their pamphlets. Parents rejoiced in the news that they could make of their children what they willed.

The reverence for the child suffered its most severe blow with this work. Watson reacted against the child-centered, turn of the century view of the nursery as the paradise of childhood. The behaviorist's child had to be docile and malleable in order to fit into the world. Later critics (Hardyment, 1983) have noted the ruthlessness of the

behavioristic approach to child-rearing, the great deal of crying normally required to establish good habits, the loneliness and emotional detachment, and even the physical torture experienced by children.

The behaviorist goal was to "raise a child as free as possible of sensitivities to people and one, who almost from birth, is relatively independent of the family situation" (1928b, p.186). But "children are made not born" (p.7) and they can only be made right if the environment is right. Having a child should be "a carefully thought out operation" (p.8), like buying a car or deciding to keep a dog. A child needs a room of his own where no adult should sleep or spend much time. Devised as a way of isolating the child for the sake of proper conditioning, the idea was new then, unthinkable even in the wealthiest Victorian household where the nursery had been the world for all the children in the family, complete with the nursemaid in residence.

The desired product of the perfect environment was the convenient child,

"a child who never cries unless actually struck by a pin figuratively speaking, who loses himself in work and play, who quickly learns to overcome the small difficulties in his environment without running to his mother, father, nurse, or other adult, who soon builds up a wealth of habits that tides him over dark and rainy days, who puts on such habits of politeness and neatness and cleanliness that adults are willing to be around him at least part of the day; a child who is willing to be around adults without fighting incessantly for notice--who eats what is set before him and 'ask no questions for conscience sake'--who sleeps and rests when he is put to bed to sleep and rest..." (1928b, p.10).

Watson called this the ideal "happy child"; but the behaviors that were encouraged seemed to benefit primarily the adults living with the child rather than the child himself.

Children were not educated but conditioned; punishment or "painful stimulus" was supposed to be applied at the proper time to insure the desired behavior. According to Watson, physical pain did not hurt children, but their parents' emotions did. He warned readers about "the dangers lurking in the mother's kiss. There are serious rocks ahead for the over-kissed child" (p.70-71). Constant 'coddling' only causes invalidism. "There is a sensible way of treating children," Watson affirmed, "treat them as though they were young adults" (p.81).

In fact, Watson considered, like Thorndike before him, that the education that most benefited the human child had to follow the same principles as animal training. "If you expect a dog to grow up and be useful as a watchdog, a bird dog, a foxhound, useful for anything except a lap dog, you wouldn't dare treat it the way you treat your child" (p.82). It is not a coincidence then, that his advice often sounded like good dog training. Good children should get "a pat on the head if they have made an extraordinary good job of a difficult task" (p.82). Parents who wanted to know what to do with their young child during the day were told "to put it out in the backyard a large part of the day. Build a fence around the yard so that you are sure no harm

can come to it...[and] be sure to dig some small holes in the yard so it has to crawl in and out of them" (p.84).

The behaviorist's child had to be independent as early as possible. He had to learn to do things for himself and learn to be alone. He should "feed itself" at the age of 18 months and eat alone, "hunger will do wonders" (p.108). He should be left alone in the bathroom at the age of eight months, and should learn to sleep alone, light out and the door closed, at the age of two, "if he howls, let him howl" (p.120).

Through Freudian influence, Watson became interested in and aware of childhood sexuality. He dealt with it in the way he dealt with any bad habit, he recommended prevention. Thumbsucking, masturbation, even homosexuality could be prevented if parents acted responsibly and swiftly. Children's behavior reflect upon the care and training parents provide: "Parents whose children suck their thumbs are condemned in progressive communities" (p.135).

In spite of the great popularity Watson's behaviorism enjoyed among parents, early childhood educators were reluctant to accept the view of a mindless child, incapable of purposive behavior. Forest (1927) briefly acknowledged Watson's methodological contribution to the objective observation of children's behavior and his emphasis on the earliest years as a time when "an appreciable amount of undesirable learning" (p.203) might occur but found no other

applications for Watson's ideas. Naumburg (1928), on the other hand, perceived the limiting implications of a theory that considered the human being "no better than an amoeba or a mouse" (p.156). She also pointed out the close relationship existing between Thorndike's and Watson's theories in spite of the hereditarianism of the former and the passionate environmentalism of the latter; "those experts whose faith is in measurements of intelligence or special performance tests are closely allied to the behaviorist group... they all base their methods on modern developments of animal psychology, which in America grew out of the work of Thorndike" (p.156-157).

Although Naumburg acknowledged the important contribution of exact methods, she mentioned A. N. Whitehead in support of her conviction that no "individual psychologist [can] act as an unprejudiced instrument to a purely objective experiment" (p.158). This was indeed possible for Watson because he denied the existence of mind and consciousness; "to him, there is no inner life of the organism in which the world could be reflected" (p.160). This was the premise that educators of young children found difficult to accept in its radical formulation.

Watson had often expressed utopian hopes for a perfect childrearing. In an ideal world, no child would stay too long with his natural mother in order to prevent

emotional attachment, and its later life sequelae. Children would be raised in communal homes according to behavioristic principles. In 1948, B. F. Skinner wrote about such an utopia in Walden Two, a work that owes an enormous debt to Watson. In spite of Skinner's later (1972) criticism of Watson's ideas as "coldly detached theory of child care," Walden Two is more Watsonian than Skinnerian.

B. F. Skinner is a modern behaviorist. Like Watson, he is an environmentalist, and although his terms of operant and respondent are his creation, his ideas go back to Thorndike (Herrenstein, 1977). Skinnerian research focused on learning; his goal, like Thorndike's, was the efficient functioning of education, and ultimately, of all society through the application of scientifically developed laws. Herrenstein speculated in 1977, that Skinner's major role would prove to be that of a philosopher and social visionary.

Animal research was Skinner's life long endeavor and his laws of learning or conditioning were all derived from animals and used directly in human applications. Although Skinner did not equate man and animal, he considered that "what is common to pigeon and man is a world in which certain contingencies of reinforcement prevail" (1968, p.84). Watson still postulated a human nature, although weak and malleable; and, although Skinner did not like to be called the psychologist of the empty organism, he stated

that "the organism is irrelevant either as the site of physiological processes or as the locus of mentalistic activities" (Evans, 1968, p.22). What mattered to Skinner, even more than to Watson, was the understanding of behavior in order to be able to control it.

A recurrent topic of Skinner's work is the nature of individual freedom and the manipulation of human affairs. In education, Skinner contributed to the fragmentation of teaching and the interpretation of education as information, in the sense of giving shape or form to behavior (Herrenstein, 1977).

There is one main thread going through Skinner's work and that is the search for efficiency through technology derived from research. His definition of human nature as a system which behaves in an orderly way, in short, a machine, was assumed to be valid and correct because it was efficient and effective. The goal is more important than the conception; according to Skinner,

"in education we can specify the changes in the student we want to bring about--and in an effective way, much more effective than the person who thinks of the student simply as an individual whose wishes must be respected, who must make decisions, and so on" (Evans, 1968, p.25).

A believer in applied psychology, Skinner considered childhood as an important problem, since it is an unavoidable phenomenon of human life, and he set out to find a

technological solution to it. Justly or unjustly, for many Skinner's name has become associated to the so-called baby-box. Just as Watson's child care book, the baby box represented such an extreme conceptualization of the child that it may become an easy target of derision. It is worthy of study, however, because the child again became secondary to the adults' comfort and convenience, in sharp contrast to the Romantic view of the care and education of children as a sacred mission.

In the October 1945 issue of the Ladies' Home Journal, Skinner published an article (reprinted in Skinner, 1972) in which he described a labor-saving invention designed "to ease the lot [of the housewife] by simplifying and improving the care of babies." The appliance consisted in "a closed compartment" in which "crying and fussing could always be stopped by slightly lowering the temperature." The infant was kept behind glass, the insulated walls muffled all noises, and a curtain could be drawn over the window. The box made clothing and bedding unnecessary, saving on laundry; only one and one-half hour a day was required "to feed, change, and otherwise care for the baby."

Watson's dream had been turned into a gadget: the child was isolated, noises would not condition fears, and a thermostat automatically regulated the temperature, all "in the space taken by a standard crib." The isolation of the child permitted the implementation of strict schedules, a

practice that saved time and offered the mother "relaxation and freedom for other activities." In addition "one advantage not to be overlooked is that the soundproofing also protects the family from the baby!"

In spite of all its apparent virtues, the Aircrib did not become the commercial success Skinner had hoped for. Although the artificial provision of favorable condition was, according to Skinner, "the spirit of the world of the future," critics worried about the drastic isolation of the child. As an English psychiatrist put it, "the machine seemed deliberately to foster infantile apartheid in an age of diminishing family togetherness" (quoted in Skinner, 1983, p.349).

The reduction of the child to the sum of observable behaviors eliminated the world of emotions as personal experience and permitted the objectivation of the other. This concept, a valid assumption for questions of scientific method, was extended by the behaviorists to all adult-child relationships, even to those of parents and their children. In a world where emotions were "a matter of the probability of engaging in certain kinds of behavior defined by certain kinds of consequences" (Evans, 1968, p.11), the uniqueness of familial attachment was a useless idea.

Walden Two was such a world. In Watsonian terms, Skinner stated "Home is not the place to raise children... the control of behavior is an intricate science, into which

the average mother could not be initiated without years of training" (p.142). The weakening of the family was an explicit Skinnerian goal; it "will make experimental breeding possible" (p.137) and will create the conditions for childcare to become a scientific occupation, "very close to that of a highly skilled laboratory technician" (p.145).

A look at the children raised communally in Walden Two showed Skinner's ideal. They were "angels," "shining clean," well behaved even when without supervision. They spoke quietly and moved quickly; they worked at an early age, "moderately but happily" (p.60). Not surprisingly, they were raised in an "efficient way" (p.97), in cubicles with glass windows, protected from germs, temperature variations, noise, and also from frustration, anxiety, and fear. Children did not experience destructive and wasteful emotions because these were no longer needed in a scientifically engineered society.

The suppression of emotions was the goal of a rigorous training that involved severe biological frustrations; the concerned observer was reassured that "the unhappiness is ridiculously trivial to the well-trained child" (p.113). Adults designed a series of adversities, somewhat like the holes in Watson's backyard, in order to provide the child with an "escape from the petty emotions which eat the heart out of the unprepared." Through adversity children acquired also an "immeasurably increased

efficiency, because they can stick to a job without suffering the aches and pains which soon beset most of us" (p.112).

Two attributes seemed to be innate to human nature, according to Skinner: the motivation to explore and to know and an antagonism between the individual and society, "our original sin" (p.104). The former had to be preserved "by fortifying the child against discouragement" (p.124), the latter had to be resolved by developing through conditioning a "triumph over oneself" (p.112).

Childhood as an experience was kept as short as possible. One or two years after reaching childbearing age, children married and produced children of their own, a good way of keeping "the adolescent out of trouble" (p.132). Having fulfilled their biological duty and liberated from parental duties by communal childrearing, young people could take their place in society as efficient adults much earlier than usual.

Children were the subjects of an imagined social experiment in Walden Two. Skinner also found them excellent subjects for real experiments "because the human infant can be reinforced by very trivial environmental events; it does not need such a reward as food" (1972, p.564); he concluded that human babies were "just as smart as dogs or pigeons" (p.565). Throughout his career he believed in the possibility of objectively arriving to a knowledge about human

behavior that would make possible fundamental improvements. The early utopian dream never disappeared from his work.

In addressing the need for a new conception of the individual, Skinner (1972) insisted on the abolition of the idea of man as an originator of action and on the thorough renunciation of the inner man:

"We need a complete account at the external level ...the organism cannot initiate anything unless you assume it is capable of whimsical changes. As a determinist, I must assume that the organism is simply mediating the relationships between the forces acting upon it and its own output" (Skinner in Evans, 1968, p.23).

He also dismissed as irrelevant, the notion of personal responsibility and of a will capable of conscious motion. Only facts confirmed by science should be operative in order "to have a better world" (1972, p.355). Skinner pointed out that his ideas were "the return to eighteenth century dream of Perfectionism with its basic contention that if human nature is determined by environment and if environment can be changed, human nature can be changed" (1972, p.330).

The implementation of that dream was to take the form of efficiency in education through the teaching machine. This idea had been formulated as early as 1912 by Thorndike (Skinner, 1983), but was not accepted by progressive education, hostile to predetermined mechanical learning. The teachers' criticism did not surprise Skinner since

"professional educators [are] the most refractory in taking up a new point in education" (1983, p.201).

The fact that accepting the use of programmed instruction meant also a completely new idea about the child did not escape Skinner; "many philosophers of education still insisted that knowledge was inside the student and had only to be released, it lay waiting to be born, needing only a midwife" (p.206). Few educators were prepared to renounce that idea completely; even when computer-aided instruction seemed to have realized Skinner's plan of teaching by machine, he did not consider it an adequate embodiment of his ideas since "there was still a tendency to make the computer act like a teacher; the basic principles of programming were not often followed" (1983, p.390-391).

The central point of the teaching machine was the scientific dispensation of reward or positive reinforcement in order "to shape [the student's] behavior progressively towards the goals of education" (Skinner in Evans, 1968, p.71). Learning happens most effectively when it is rewarded, a logical consequence of the belief in an empty child. A quotation from Montessori might illustrate the point. Discussing the value of rewards and punishments, Montessori stated that

"to apply such a form of education would be to draw the new generation back to a lower level, not to lead them into their true heritage of progress...[the student's] dignity as a man is reduced to the limits of the dignity of a machine which must be oiled if it is to be kept

going, because it does not have in itself the impulse of life" (1912/1964, p.22).

Skinner's behaviorism represented one strand of theoretical psychology current in the 1930s, the objective analysis of learning. At the same time, a mentalistic strand studied perception; by the 1960s this second strand had "become mainline American psychology" (Bruner, 1983, p.68). Skinner and his followers became more and more marginal; "objectivism in its radical behaviorist form now seems quaint" (Bruner, 1983, p.60). Piaget, Vygotsky, Bruner himself, had rediscovered the mind.

Skinnerian theory found a late application in early childhood education in several so-called compensatory programs. The best known was the Bereiter-Engelman Head Start model for academic achievement. Their goal was to bring children into the mainstream of human thought through intensive short drills followed by positive reinforcements, ignoring children's needs for play and creativity. Weber (1984) observed that "such a program misses the opportunity of education to strengthen the child as a unique person and an independent thinker" (p.204). This is also an apt criticism for behaviorism in general.

CHAPTER VII
THE PRAGMATIC CHILD
THE IDEA OF THE CHILD IN DEWEY

By 1900, the rift between the Froebelian and the reformers in the kindergarten movement had become final. A major factor of the definition of a new kindergarten was John Dewey, whose long and influential career spanned almost seven decades. This chapter will be limited to exploring Dewey's decisive attacks on the Froebelian view of the child and his own definition of the nature of the child. His ideas began to be noted by early childhood educators around the 1890s (Forest, 1927) and are, still today, even if often unacknowledged, a part of the present conception of the American child.

According to Hofstadter (1963), John Dewey's contribution to the new education consisted in his synthesis of the views about the child emerging in America at the end of last century and his ability to link them to pragmatism and to the growing demand for social reform. Although this amalgam had to result in an eclectic definition of the child, Dewey intended to present a completely novel one. It is probably impossible to decide if Dewey succeeded, in part due to the ambiguity of his writings (Hofstadter, 1963), the difficulties of interpretation of his language, and the infelicities of his style (Dworkin, 1959).

Dewey has been the object of extensive scholarship, often adulatory. He has also been subject to attack from the right, as an abettor of "creeping Socialism," and from the left, as "the philosopher of imperialism" (Wells, 1954) or "the theorist of bourgeois democracy" (Novack, 1975). Hofstadter (1963) criticized his optimistic faith in education as the exclusive agent of social change; Novack (1974) called it "a naive and almost magical belief in the omnipotence of education in relation to the rest of social life" (p.237). Dewey's most important works were written at a time of optimism and faith in the possibility of change and progress; the late twentieth century, on the other hand, lives with the realization that it is more likely that economics will dictate the values of education than that the schools will change the nature of socio-economic relationships (Bowles & Gintis, 1976).

In order to understand Dewey's ideas about the child, it is necessary to study them in the context of his pragmatism. Dewey came in direct contact with the major ideas on children current at the time: Hall's recapitulationism, the social thought and action of Jane Addams, the controversy around Froebelianism, the experimental psychology of Thorndike. William James' pragmatism, however, was the decisive influence both on Dewey's philosophical thinking and on his theory of education. James' thought helped Dewey

to take the step away from the idealistic philosophy of Kant and Hegel in which he was educated.

William James has exerted a considerable influence on education not only through his psychological works but also, more directly, through a series of talks which he presented personally on numerous occasions. In 1892, at the height of his reputation as a psychologist, James was invited to lecture on psychological topics that might interest teachers. These presentations, which were published in 1899, were a deliberate adaptation of portions of the Principles of Psychology into various instructional strategies and policies applicable from kindergarten through high school (Myers, 1983). The great interest in these Talks to Teachers (1899/1983) derived from the promise that the application of the new scientific psychology held for the improvement of pedagogy. In his preface, James stated that his

"main desire has been to make [the teachers] conceive, and, if possible, reproduce sympathetically in their imagination, the mental life of their pupil as the sort of active unity which he himself feels it to be. He doesn't chop himself into distinct processes and compartments" (1899/1983, p.3-4).

The new psychology was changing the conception of man's inner life. Wundt had already replaced the soul with the idea of consciousness. James, in turn, wanted to emphasize the dynamic aspect of the mind and called it "stream of consciousness," a flow of awareness, knowledge,

desire, "that constantly pass and re-pass, and that constitute our inner life." (p.19). James presented a practical, pragmatic alternative to the rational understanding of this inner life. The only function of inner life was that of "useful conduct". Man, then "is primarily a practical being, whose mind is given him to aid in adapting him to this world's life" (p.24).

In this evolutionary view of the mind as a product of brain action, ethical ideas and esthetic visions were subordinated "to more practically useful products of the mind" (p.25). Every thought, every reflection had to result in action. Rational contemplation did not exist, neither did truth as an idea; "the truth is too great for any one actual mind, even though that mind be dubbed 'the Absolute,' to know the whole of it. The facts and worth of life need many cognizers to take them in" (p.4). Truth was defined as developing in action, thus "we cannot escape our destiny, which is practical" (p.26). Consequently, James believed that children should be trained to behavior, a concept that encompassed active and passive habits, motor discharge and inhibition. The central task of education was the early inculcation of as many good habits as possible; "could the young but realize how soon they will become mere walking bundles of habits, they would give more heed to their conduct while in the plastic state. We are spinning our own fates, good or evil, and never to be undone" (p.53).

Curti (1935) commented on the extreme individualism underlying this assertion saying that "there is something almost Calvinistic about these words. It is to be observed, moreover, that it is we ourselves who are spinning our fates: our handicaps, our poverty, our malnutrition in youth, our inadequate schooling, our frustrations due to conditions over which we have slight control, are not taken into account" (p.446).

On the other hand, the dismissal of the rationality of mind resulted in an anti-intellectual mistrust of language as the carrier of information; "verbal reactions, useful as they are, are insufficient" (James, 1899/1983, p.31). Children must learn by doing; workshop and laboratory are more important than books. They teach honesty and self-reliance, "they keep the interest and attention always cheerfully engaged" (p.31).

The child, according to James, was born with "an equipment of native reactions" (p.9). Among them, love, fear, curiosity, imitation, ambition, ownership, constructiveness, pride, and pugnacity were considered the most useful ones in education. Anticipating Skinner's belief in positive reinforcement, James pointed out that love will be more productive than fear in helping teachers obtain desired results. Curiosity as "the impulse towards better cognition...is more vivacious during childhood and youth than in after life" (p.37). Imitation is interpreted as the

instrument not only of the acquisition of culture but also of the taking consciousness of the self through the imitation of what others are. James proposed the wise use of these instincts in the classroom, "appealing to [them] as to reap a maximum of benefit with a minimum of harm" (p.41).

Instincts, however, were deemed only as the starting points of habits. "All our life, so far as it has a definite form, is but a mass of habits--practical, emotional, and intellectual--systematically organized for our weal or woe, and bearing us irresistibly towards our destiny" (p.47). Habits were compared to creases on paper. Children, at birth, were like fine new paper, not unwritten as Locke wanted, but rather smooth and uncreased. Every habit, every crease, would also make a groove into which later behavior will fall.

Children were believed to be full of potentialities. With increasing age, however, individuals became "stereotyped creatures, imitators and copiers of [their] past selves" (p.48). Therefore it was the aim of education to instill the right habits at an early age. Education would not be all pleasurable exercise. On the contrary, the child had to do certain things "for no other reason than its difficulty" (p.52). This would produce the heroic individual who "will stand like a tower when everything rocks around him, and his softer fellow-mortals are winnowed like

chaff in the blast" (p.53). In short, character is the sum of a person's habits.

James postulated that young children were interested in the "sensible properties of material things" (p.89). Thus, the best way to build character in early childhood was considered to be by manual training. James insisted on

"how important for life--for the moral tone of life, quite apart from definite practical pursuits--is this sense of readiness for emergencies which a man gains through early familiarity and acquaintance with the world of material things" (p.90).

This did not mean that, intellectually, the concrete example would be enough. James sharply criticized "the namby-pamby attempts of the softer pedagogy to lubricate things for [young children], and make them interesting." Young children are capable intellectual beings "and it is a poor compliment to their rational appetite to think that anecdotes about little Tommies and little Jennies are the only kind of things their minds can digest" (p.92).

In closing, James exhorted teachers to look upon the child as "a little sensitive, impulsive, associative, and reactive organism, partly fated and partly free...as a subtle little piece of machinery" (p.114). This theoretical objectivation of the child had to be accompanied, however, James insisted, by the ability of seeing him sub specie bono and loving him as well.

If the Jamesian definition of the child sounds materialistic and mechanical, he anticipated these charges by denying them. James expressed the hope that teachers would understand that the theories he held "do not necessarily force a man to become a fatalist or a materialist" (p.112). Cremin (1964) accurately described James' thought as "humane, adventurous, essentially democratic, and always optimistic" (p.109).

James' Talks were not well received by the Froebelians. Susan Blow (1908) passionately criticized his dismissal of metaphysics and his instrumental conception of truth. Blow, an idealist, believed in the correspondence between truth and eternal reality. For James, truths are multiple, man made products. Blow quoted with dismay James' assertion that "the trail of the human serpent is thus over everything" (1908, p.357); the right and the true had become the expedient. Nevertheless, Blow saluted pragmatism for opposing naturalistic determinism; in James' words "life is not the mere rattling off of a chain that was forged innumerable ages ago" (1908, p.360). But she ultimately rejected the pragmatic vision of a "world of plural truths, plural wills, and plural possibilities" (p.360).

Modern developmental psychology considers James' pluralistic pragmatism a fruitful methodological alternative. It stood in opposition to an acceptance of the

absolute nature of rationality and proposed an ever-changing and unfinished reality in which truth was not single and immutable but rather multiple and contingent, to be evaluated only in terms of its practical consequences. Reality was accepted as it appears to the human individual and the optimal method of inquiry was pragmatic empiricism. In James, one may see, as Dixon and Nesselrode (1983) pointed out, "the concept of a pluralistic universe, a fallible view of rationality, and an evolutionary or temporal perspective on human behavioral and social functioning" (p.137).

John Dewey was, like James, a pragmatist and a Darwinist. But his thought reflected, at the same time, his social and political interests. Kessen (1983b) invoked G. H. Mead and Dewey as the originators of the idea of the child as a cultural invention; he pointed to Dewey in his emphasis on the moral nature of research in general, but particularly, in the case of developmental psychology. Pluralism, in Dewey's terms, did not look for the true child but for the changing diversity of children. The social nature of human beings was the fundamental assumption that defined Dewey's pragmatism; the individual is a reflection of society and society, in turn, is the carrier of the ethical idea.

Dewey's ideas about the child were persuasive at the time because they were presented in the context of a

criticism of the weaknesses of the elementary school. The realm of the classroom in the 1890s was totally set off from the experience of the child who inhabited it (Handlin, 1959). This was not, however, the case in early childhood education; in fact, Dewey looked to those who in one way or another worked with young children in order to find points of departure for the implementation of his own ideas. But, while the idealists looked at the essential child, the pragmatist Dewey saw children as pupils, instruments and material for society's designs. The child left the Froebelian "paradise of childhood," by that time overgrown with sentimentality, and entered the public school, as young as possible. A whole philosophical tradition, then and now, considered this to be a "diminished" (Rushdoony, 1963) view of the child.

The idea of the school in Dewey, like the concept of the kindergarten in Froebel, was full of rich philosophical and programmatic implications that went well beyond the practical realities of the neighborhood institution. In My Pedagogical Creed, published in 1897, Dewey stated that "the school is primarily a social institution...[it] should simplify existing social life; should reduce it as it were, to an embryonic form" (1897/1959, p.22-23). In The School and Society, he stated that [the school] shall be made a genuine form of active community life" (1900, p.11).

For the children, the school should become somewhat like G. S. Hall's famous sandpile, but with an adult in charge. A recapitulationist view of the child was very much a part of Dewey's early educational thought, but, instead of the vital experiencing of biological and anthropological history postulated by Hall, Dewey believed that "it is through the social agencies that [the child] recapitulates in a few short years the progress which it has taken the race slow centuries to work out" (1900, p.91).

Recapitulation was interpreted in terms of the culture-epoch theory with an emphasis on the development of the technologies of production. The goal was to make intelligible to the individual the working of an industrialized advanced society: "The child is not, educationally speaking, to be led through the epochs of the past, but is to be led by them to resolve present complex culture into simpler factors, and to understand the forces which have produced the present" (quoted in Gould, 1977, p.154). Dewey, like all recapitulationists, not only implied that primitivism was a reduced version of a developed society, he also maintained that children shared this characteristic with the primitives: "The child learns to handle the materials which lie at the foundation of civilization in much the same way that primitive people used them, because this way is suited to the degree of skill he has reached" (Dewey & Dewey, 1915, p.258).

Although Dewey first saw the liberalizing influence of recapitulation on education, he later considered it conservative and rejected the idea completely in Democracy and Education (1923) for its "retrospective" implications. In this work, Dewey stated that "the great advantage of immaturity...is that it enables us to emancipate the young from dwelling in an outgrown past" (p.85). The "industrial program," based on Dewey's ideas intellectualized the recapitulatory process. Children were not really savages or early agrarian people, they just were interested in that epoch of human history.

It was seen as the function of the school to help children appreciate the natural facts and the social conditions of different periods of history. Dewey believed that "the knowledge of the place farming and horticulture have had in the history of the race and which they occupy in present social organization" (p.235) actually offered children a shortcut to the understanding of modern industrial society.

When Dewey proceeded to elaborate his theories of human nature, he was confronted with the age-old problem of the relationship between body and mind. While Watson would, a few decades later, "jettison" the mind completely, and James had described it dynamically as a stream-of-consciousness, Dewey postulated a mind-body unity. In a social and

pragmatic view of man, a purely spiritual view of the mind seemed of little use. Dewey stated that

"what is called inner is simply that which does not connect with others--which is not capable of free and full communication. What is termed spiritual culture has usually been futile, with something rotten about it, just because it has been conceived as a thing which a man might have internally and therefore, exclusively" (1923, p.143).

or, in a positive formulation, he affirmed that "what one is as a person is what one is as associated with others, in a free give and take of intercourse" (1923, p.143). Margaret Naumburg later (1928) observed that "Dewey is very chary of the inner, the subjective life, at any time" (p.112). The idea that the self is shaped by the reaction of others to it, survived in what is now called the transactional idea of the self (Bruner, 1983).

With the dismissal of the inner life of the child, the affective aspect was relegated to a secondary role. Dewey stated that "emotions are the reflex of actions...if we can secure right habits of action and thought...the emotions will for the most part take care of themselves" (1897/1959, p.30). He considered any emphasis on affectivity as a sign of sentimentalism. By negating, or at least minimizing, the importance of an inner life, Dewey was able to formulate his social view of the child. He wrote that "the child has his own instincts and tendencies, but we do not know what these mean until we can translate them into

their social equivalents" (1897/1959, p.21). For Dewey, the living child as an individual was just "the expression of the rudimentary instincts of human nature" (1900, p.54); the raw materials for education are "the instinctive, impulsive attitudes and activities of the child" (p.112). Children would become truly human only through social interaction and cooperation in the educational setting.

In order to clarify his conceptualization, Dewey explained his concept of growth in opposition to that of development. Children are not potentialities, they are, from the beginning, actualities at different stages of growth: "Where there is life, there are already eager and impassioned activities. Growth is not something done to them; it is something they do" (1923, p.50).

Against the Romantic idea of development as the unfolding of "latent powers toward a definite goal," Dewey stated that "a child is not born with faculties to be unfolded, but with special impulses of action to be developed through their use in preserving and perfecting life in the social and physical conditions under which it goes on" (Dewey & Dewey, 1915, p.160). This was a life-long process; the only difference between adults and children was the differing nature of their modes of growth. "Realization that life is growth," affirmed Dewey, "protects us from that so-called idealization of childhood which is in effect nothing but lazy indulgence" (1923, p.60).

If childhood was growth, then it could not be defined as a preparation for the future. Rather it was seen as life itself: "growing is not something which is completed in odd moments...it is a continuous leading into the future" (1923, p.65). Dewey opposed the idea of development because it implied "an unfolding from within, hence sacred" (p.66), particularly because it also meant a process that was assumed to be individual, removed from environmental influences. The pragmatic child was developed by societal forces by virtue of his original nature. Dewey believed that "children are gifted with an equipment of the first order for social intercourse. Few grown-up persons retain all of the flexible and sensitive ability of children to vibrate sympathetically with the attitudes and doings of those about them" (1923, p.51).

The value of the infant's immaturity lied, for Dewey, in his dependence on adults, a fact that permitted the optimal use of his plasticity for social learning. Human beings were born with a greater number of instincts than any other animal, but they had to learn how to use them. Dewey accepted completely Fiske's (1909) view of the evolutionary importance of a prolonged infancy; in Dewey's words, "it provides a further push to social progress" (1923, p.54).

The idea of evolution according to Dewey, precluded an individualistic understanding of the development of the mind. Mind "represents the outworkings of the endeavor of

thought of humanity" (1900, p.91) and it operates only in a social environment. The purpose of the school was to provide this environment, and to teach the basic skills which would "unlock to the child the wealth of social capital which lies beyond the possible range of his limited personal experience" (1900, p.104).

The social child attended a school that reflected the life of the larger community in order to acquire "a trained and sound body, skillful eye and hand, habits of industry, perseverance, and, above all, habits of serviceableness." Ideally the child would become, Dewey insisted, "a thoroughly efficient and serviceable member of society, ...educated for leadership as well as for obedience" (1897, p.11).

But this child was also conceptualized as the carrier of social reform. Dewey expressed the hope that

"when the school introduces and trains each child of society into membership within such a little community, saturating him with the spirit of service, and providing him with the instruments of effective self-direction, we shall have the deepest and best guaranty (sic) of a larger society which is worthy, lovely and harmonious" (1900, p.28).

Dewey was not alone in casting the child in the role of the redeemer (Wishy, 1968). In Dewey's early thought, the paradox consisted in the fact that by deemphasizing the inner life and the individual contributions of the child, and by minimizing the role of the adult in the formation of

the child, he based social progress on a rather weak premise. In a later consideration of the role of childhood, Dewey invested the child with a capacity for originality, for leaving behind "the brutalities and inequities established in adult habits" (1922/1957, p.96). Dewey regretted that through adult customs "the delightful originality of the child is tamed" (p.98). With great optimism, Dewey expressed his faith in the child as a redeemer when he wrote that

"the intimation never wholly deserts us that there is in the unformed activities of childhood and youth the possibilities of a better life for the community as well as for individuals here and there. This dim sense is the ground of our abiding idealization of childhood. For with all its extravagancies and uncertainties, its effusions and reticences, it remains a standing proof of a life wherein growth is normal not an anomaly, activity a delight not a task, and where habit-forming is an expansion of power not its shrinkage" (p.99).

An alternative view of the "socialized" child was offered by Jane Addams, a friend of Dewey during his Chicago years. As was pointed out above in the context of the problem of poverty, Addams also saw the child as the carrier of change for the regeneration of society and proposed a program of "socialized education", in many ways, similar to Dewey's (Cremin, 1964). But for Jane Addams, regeneration would come through the liberation of the spiritual nature of every human being for she believed that "man's moral idealism is the constructive force of progress"

(1907, p.179). A democratic society would be possible "if we only release that wonderful power which children possess and which we have so long repressed" (quoted in Levine, 1971, p.101).

The new ideas in education touched and transformed early childhood education, particularly after the Froebelian kindergarten became a part of the public school. Vanderwalker (1908) expressed this with a certain note of regret when she wrote: "had the kindergarten remained outside the school system it might have remained uninfluenced by the movements that were shaping general education; its incorporation into the system made its modification inevitable" (p.252).

While conservatives were clinging to Froebelian orthodoxy and liberals, Vanderwalker among them, were hoping for "a new interpretation of the Froebelian gospel," Dewey was effectively demolishing Froebel's theory, bit by bit, in his own writings and through the work of his collaborators.

Froebelians had changed the attitude toward childhood during the decades around the turn of the century and had exerted an influence on primary education, although maybe not to the extent that their proponents liked to believe. But American Froebelians had in a short number of years, stereotyped the method and sentimentalized the philosophy of Froebel. Anna Bryan, an associate of Dewey, observed

already in 1890, the formalism which had crept into kindergarten practice when she asked:

"Can there be a more arbitrary performance, one which more utterly violates every law of the kindergarten, than to place a gift before the child, and while he, with tingling fingers and urgent activity, must sit passive, put him through a categorical questioning on the exciting subject of the numbers of edges, corners, and faces of the block?" (quoted in Foster, 1927, p.175).

Thus, Froebelians represented both the current view of the young child and an easy target for criticism. By contrasting his own views with Froebel's, Dewey did effectively clarify his ideas.

Occasionally, Dewey implied that the much criticized formalism was already contained in Froebel's writings when he affirmed, for example, that "Froebel's love of symbolism often got the better of his sympathetic insight; and there was substituted for development as arbitrary and externally imposed a scheme of dictation as the history of instruction has ever seen" (1923, p.68). But in The School and Society (1900), he had stated, more accurately, that "in the worship of the external doings discussed by Froebel, we have ceased to be loyal to his principles" (1915, p.114).

In spite of the occasional acknowledgement of Froebel's contributions, German idealism seemed abstruse and absurd to the pragmatic mind. The contrast between these two systems of thought may be best illustrated by Dewey's criticism of a common kindergarten practice. Froebelians,

he observed, maintained that children should gather in a circle "not because a circular grouping is convenient for social and practical purposes, but because the circle is a symbol of infinity which will tend to evoke the infinite latent in the child's soul" (Dewey & Dewey, 1915).

Another topic in which the conceptual incompatibility can be observed is that of play, so important in the Froebelian kindergarten. For the Romantics, play was the most human occupation because, through its freedom and creativity, human beings experienced the Absolute. In this sense, play transcended the reality of the specific actions and acquired a symbolism of which the child became gradually aware. For Dewey, on the other hand, play should be "as real and definite as the adult's activities are" (1900, p.118). Play, like work, are to be regulated in order to facilitate "desirable mental and moral growth" (1923, p.230). Moreover, Dewey did not believe that play was the prevalent occupation of childhood. On the contrary, children are "anxious to engage in the pursuits of adults which effect external change" (p.239).

Dewey's understanding of Froebel was shared by his follower W. H. Kilpatrick, whose own attack on Froebel appeared in 1916, at a time when the Froebelian controversy was already resolved in favor of the progressives. Nevertheless, it contributed to strengthen the social view of the child (Weber, 1969). In an age that prided itself on

scientific progress, Kilpatrick resorted to an effective technique to discredit Froebel's thought by showing his kinship to outmoded scientific theories. He tried, for example, to demonstrate that Froebel's concept of development was derived from the doctrine of preformation, a deterministic theory of the 18th century, which Kilpatrick attributed to the Romantic scientist Oken. Oken had been a brilliant embryologist, who as a defender of epigenesis, had affirmed in 1810 that "the theory of preformation contradicts the laws of development" (quoted in Gould, 1977, p.35). Oken, like Schelling, had been one of the Naturphilosophen and Froebel did share his view of nature as a unidirectional flow from lower to higher organic forms, from chaos to man. These ideas constituted what Kilpatrick called "some of the most mystical and repellent elements of [Froebel's] thinking" (1916, p.10).

Kilpatrick bluntly affirmed that Froebel's reputation was based on "ignorance, error and partiality" (p.202). Therefore his book aimed to convey to teachers the correct interpretation of the child. He contended that impulse and instincts were the modern understanding of innate ideas: "there are no idea-germs in the child's mind" (p.78). Froebel's idea of play was considered "as sugar coating for 'nasty' metaphysical pills" and Kilpatrick recommended "real play from real child motives" (p.139).

But the real child cannot be trusted. Froebel, asserted Kilpatrick, "places the element of selection within the child's native endowment instead of the social situation. Many of the child's natural impulses in their direct form are not immediately suited to present day social life. Society must select" (p.197). The contrasting views of the child could not be expressed more strikingly; the ideological loyalty to Dewey was all too apparent.

Dewey's conception of education as continuous growth considered what he calls "the Schellingesque factors", the Romantic and symbolic philosophy, as an obstacle to the integration of early childhood education and the rest of the school system (Dewey, 1900). Dewey had recognized, already in 1899, that the isolation of the kindergarten was caused by the fact that "it rested on a different conception of the child and what his education should be." And he added that "it is a new idea to many people that the kindergarten is or should be simply a part of the educational system; they are so in the habit of looking upon the kindergarten child as different from the primary school child, to be treated by different methods" (quoted in Snyder, 1972, p.196).

The defeat of Froebelian idealism made possible the incorporation of the kindergarten into the elementary school. In the 1920s, however, nursery schools began appearing in the United States, based again on a belief in

the uniqueness of the young child. The problem of continuity between early and elementary education is still an issue in the 1980s.

Dewey's idea of the pragmatic child was not unanimously welcomed by educators of young children. Susan Blow (1908) centered her criticism on the socialized school's tendency to supplant play by work. She rejected the related contention that "industry is the fountain source of the arts and institutions of society" (p.256) and affirmed, on the contrary, that man is a self-creative energy. To Dewey's proposal of engaging children in the re-creation of the evolution of technology in order "to deliver them out of a world of magic into a world of comprehended fact" (Blow, 1908, p.258), she responded that "childhood is the age of dreams and one of the greatest of educational offenses is to waken prematurely the dreaming soul" (p.259).

The substitution of the Froebelian occupations by work was looked upon as limiting since, for Blow, what children imitate they tend to become. Blow insisted on the genetic priority of play over work and affirmed that "of all children the most unchildlike is the child that does everything for a purpose and to whom everything is explained. For such a child has ceased to wonder and has forgotten how to play" (p.280). She opposed the socialized school's goal to produce "the worthy and efficient member of a

developing industrial organization" (p.332) and considered it "a great mistake to lose our short opportunity of helping children to create a larger personality and therefore a richer life, by concentrating our attention upon preparing them for industrial efficiency" (p.333).

In an examination of progressive schools polemically titled Our Enemy, the Child (1925), Agnes DeLima contended that educational theories "tend to regard some sociological or psychological principle as more sacred than the child" (p.7). Without naming Dewey, but clearly alluding to him, she wrote:

"It is the great abstraction of the future society which is set above every other consideration; the curriculum is 'socialized,' all efforts are bent to make the child an intelligent participant in a future social democracy. To this end, the pupil is given endless material bearing on the mechanics of modern industry and governments--a sort of glorified civics--calculated to turn him into a kind of socialized robot who will infallibly cooperate smoothly and efficiently with his fellows" (p.7).

DeLima also expressed her concern that the socialized school might forget that "there is also a supreme value in the highly developed individual who knows how to get on with himself" (p.68).

A similar feeling was expressed by Margaret Naumburg (1928), when she wrote that "in the schools too,...the first concern is not with human beings, but with producing a particular type of society. This mistake springs...from a diminution of proportionate weight of the inner, the

spiritual, value of each separate life, and an exaggeration of the value of the external products of herd existence" (p.115).

Dewey developed a view of the child in which he ignored the existence of emotions, the intensity of interpersonal relationships, the importance of imagination and play. Peters (1977) believed that an ideology that considered life as a series of problems that can and have to be solved given time and technology had to be deemed shallow and simplistic. According to Peters, Dewey presented an overly optimistic view of life by neglecting that aspect of reality made up by the predicaments that have to be endured.

Peters (1977) also observed that the idealization of a concept of democracy in which concrete sociological and political forces were never factored in, left no room for human irrationality and the appreciation of non-economic pursuits. The child's instincts as well as nature's forces were not the object of awe and wonder for Dewey, but something that could and had to be harnessed for the benefit of society.

Cavallo (1979) summarized the goals of the progressive school as "designed to prepare youngsters for life in a technological, bureaucratic, interdependent, and democratic society, where untoward expressions of conflict and emotion retarded development of the capacity to calmly and objectively analyze complex social processes and problems"

(p.179). Placing the responsibility of the education of young children with the state rather than with the family became a way to insure that these aims would be achieved. Cavallo concluded that the permanent legacy of Dewey's ideas was "the attempt to 'de-privatize' the child's intellectual and emotional faculties." In the socialized school, "[the] pupil had no place to hide, no inviolate inner sanctum off limits to intrusion from peers or superiors" (1979, p.180).

The reduction of the child to a social being by depriving him of an inner self did not succeed in resolving the dualism that Dewey so abhorred; it just ignored it. Dewey's hope that education would be the fundamental method of social progress and reform has fallen short of expectation. In the 1930s, he realized that not all change could come through education (Hofstadter, 1963). But despite attacks from the right and from the left, and especially as has been seen, from within the progressive movement itself, his ideas on education have had no serious rival especially in the area of primary education. They survive in different guises and formulations, in the public school systems of America.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CHILD

THE CHILD IN THE PSYCHOANALYTICAL TRADITION

Sigmund Freud came to America in 1909 by invitation of G. Stanley Hall to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of Clark University and to receive the first and only honorary doctorate for his achievements (Ross, 1972). American psychologists and educators had to contend from then on with what many years later Bruner would call "the night view of human nature" (1983, p.35). Hall, who had expressed rather unconventional views about children's sexuality in his study on adolescence (1908), saluted the advent of psychoanalysis as "the greatest epoch in our science" (1923, p.409). Although Hall did not share Freud's idea of a normal-abnormal continuity and the pervasiveness of sexuality, he found Freud's contribution to the understanding of the child "so genetic and vital that it came to me to seem almost like a new dispensation in the domain of psychology" (1923, p.409-410).

Hall had perceived correctly the revolutionary character of Freudian thought. Freud himself had drawn a parallel between the impact of his ideas and that of Copernicus and Darwin in terms of the three historical blows that the conception of human nature had to experience in the course of history. Copernicus had shaken humanity's cosmological assumptions, Darwin had redefined its place in

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the biological chain of being and now, Freud had discovered an unsuspected psychological world beyond the conscious control of human beings. Freud considered this blow to man's mastery of his own mind as "the most wounding of the three" (Shakow & Rapaport, 1968, p.16). Erikson pointed out that before Freud, "man (that is, man of the male sex and of the better classes) was convinced that he was fully conscious of all there was to him, and sure of his divine values. Childhood was a mere training-ground" (1964, p.27).

Indeed, Freud was patently aware that he had "disturbed the sleep of the world" (1914/1966, p.21). Despite a resistance that ebbed and flowed for more than eight decades, the understanding of the child has been irreversibly changed by his work. And, although the era of Freudian childrearing seems to be at an end (Elkind, 1979), it was through his influence that the worry over psychological pathology took precedence over the earlier worry about physical illness in the mind of Western middle-class parents (Hardyment, 1983).

The discovery of children's sexuality was, according to Coveney (1957), "a powerful agent in the ventilation of the sentimental atmosphere which had gradually grown up around the Victorian child" (p.xiii). Freud became interested in childhood indirectly, only after having found, in his search for causes of adult psychic disturbances, that he

was always taken far back into the patient's past. Thus, he came to study earliest childhood directly, "and now the whole range of a child's sexual life came to light" (Freud, 1912/1966, p.18). Later, Freud confirmed his momentous discovery through the observation and analysis of young children. He was surprised that such easily observable facts had taken so long in being recognized; even more astonishing was, Freud said, that "one had taken so much trouble to overlook them" (1912/1966, p.18).

What emerged from Freud's writings was a tragic vision of childhood. During the early years, intense love coexisted with hate; the child's search for pleasure constantly met with the unbending demands of reality. Strictly speaking, there was no hope and no help for the child in this predicament; even the most understanding parent could not help the child escape the situation as it is given. The demands of culture and civilization held children and adults in the same unmerciful grip.

The psychoanalytic view of human nature contained the paradoxical concept of the normality of abnormality. In other words, Freud considered certain psychic phenomena as typical of human development which in other psychological constructs might have been singled out as abnormal or perverted. In Anna Freud's words, "every single developmental phase as well as every single forward move can be shown to contain disturbing concomitants which are characteristic

for them" (1982, p.86). This was a novel understanding of the child which even Hall found impossible to accept; he refused to "believe that normal children show[ed] to any marked extent the infantile aberrations which are postulated" (1923, p.410). This fundamental aspect of the psychoanalytical theory has never been accepted by American educators; Kessen (1965) noted that "the essential pessimism of Freud's view was hidden behind the thesis that permissiveness would free the child of conflict and neurosis" (p.269).

The idea of childhood innocence had become stereotyped and sentimentalized at the end of the 19th century. Scientific theories had discarded it, just as that of original sin, for it was perceived as an impediment in the objective study of child nature. Still, most would have agreed with Freud (1925/1935) that, before Three Essays on the Theory of Sex were published in 1905, "childhood was looked upon as 'innocent' and free from the lusts of sex, and the fight with the demon of 'sensuality' was not thought to begin until the troubled age of puberty" (p.59). But at Clark, Freud plainly told Americans that "a child has its sexual instincts and activities from the first; it comes into the world with them" (quoted in Hale, 1971, p.165).

Psychoanalytical theory interpreted infantile sexuality as manifesting itself in developmentally different ways. At first, pleasurable feelings centered around the

mouth; in nursing the infant experiences the first sexual feelings. Soon, the child discovered thumbsucking, a sexual activity that was interpreted as autoerotic. In time, the young child incorporated new erogenous zones. A major, and normal, experience of early childhood was masturbation which, according to Freud, "constitutes the first great deviation from the course of development laid down for civilized man" (1905/1962, p.55).

In addition to autoerotic activities, the young child showed specific feelings for persons who became his sexual objects; actually young children were deemed capable very early of strong object-selection accompanied by intense emotions. Aggressiveness and cruelty, which Freud considered constituent of human nature, were openly expressed by the child as components of the drive for mastery in the sexual instinct. Eventually, "a barrier of pity" (Freud, 1905/1962, p.59) would prevent a continued connection between sexuality and cruelty in the healthy individual.

In a very revealing passage of the second Essay on the Theory of Sexuality, Freud touched on the role of seduction and "all possible kinds of sexual irregularities" (1905/1962, p.57). While it was previously believed that children would experience sexual feelings only in the context of what today is called sexual abuse, Freud showed that such a situation was not required. Moreover, he found that a "polymorphously perverse aptitude is innately

present in their [the children's] disposition" (p.57). Young children were seen as still uninhibited; "the mental dams against sexual excess--shame, disgust and morality--have either not yet been constructed at all or are only in the course of construction" (p.57). Thus, affirmed Freud, children might easily be led to behave like prostitutes. On the other hand, however, the perverse sexual disposition of childhood were interpreted also as "the source of a number of our virtues" (p.105) through the process of sublimation.

The young child's tragic predicament resided in the fact that, possessed by strong emotions, he moved in a world he was not able to understand yet given "the small development of his intellectual systems" (Freud, 1909/1955, p.104). At the same time, the child felt curiosity about sexual matters, "unexpectedly early and intensively" (1905/1962, p.60). Freud observed that children construct remarkable theories about the origin of babies and, later, about sexual differences. The assumption that both sexes possess the same (male) genital was one of the most common ideas entertained by young boys, for example. The subsequent revelation that this was not the case, unleashed severe internal struggles around the fear of castration. Any witnessing of adult sexual activity would only add to the child's fears of maltreatment. The wish to know and the investigation of sexual matters was, according to Freud, a vital part of children's attempts toward an independent

orientation in the world. But it is precisely in this area that adults, for various reasons, are condescending and unclear. Sexual researches, then, "imply a high degree of alienation of the child from the people in his environment who formerly enjoyed his complete confidence" (1905/1962, p.63).

Early sexuality had been observed before, especially in Hall's recapitulationist naturalism. The little savage was expected to display his instincts and enjoy unabashed nakedness. Even his aggressiveness was allowed free expression, in theory, until he became tame and civilized (Hale, 1971). Although not completely prepared yet for the implications of Freud's understanding of the role of childhood sexuality, Americans had been getting used to a less idealized child. A student of Hall and the author of the first psychoanalytical dissertation, expressed the then current view as follows:

"Childhood shows us the blind strivings of momentary pleasure...the child is egotistic, self-centered, demanding gratification for his impulses at any cost. He is, as modern researches of child-study have shown him to us, non-moral, with no sure perception of the boundaries between good and evil, or between reality and imagination. The Freudian school has added to this picture of the child two other elements. They have shown that the child has a strong sex life of its own, and that his relations to the members of his own family are other than those of pastoral fancy" (Chase, 1910, p.291).

Before Freud, parental love and filial devotion were considered the 'purest' feelings; Froebel had repeatedly drawn a parallel between the parents' love for their children and God's love for humankind. Now, parents became, in Freud's view, the agents of seduction who, through affection, awakened the child's first sexual feelings and were the objects of his passionate and ambivalent emotions. Parents were characterized also as harboring unacknowledged sexual feelings toward their child. Of the mother Freud said that she "regards [her son] with feelings that are derived from her own sexual life: she strokes him, kisses him, rocks him and quite clearly treats him as a substitute for a complete sexual object" (p.89). Freud admitted that a mother would be horrified if she were made aware of the sexual nature of her feelings, an unnecessary reaction since "she is only fulfilling her task in teaching the child to love" (p.89).

In the case study of Little Hans (1909/1955), Freud described the complex relationship between a bright five-year-old and his father and mother. Love and intense sexual feelings for the mother were accompanied by the child's sadistic desire to hurt her. A similar ambivalence dominated the boy's emotions toward the father whom he feared and, at the same time, he feared for. In Little Hans, Freud examined the archetypical experience of early childhood: the

falling in love with the opposite-sex parent while experiencing feelings of hate and fear toward the same-sex parent.

The ever repeating struggle of the male child and his father was elevated to the mythological realm: in Freud's words, "Kronos devours his children...Zeus emasculates his father" (1913/1938, p.303). The childhood fantasy of marrying the mother and slaying the father was symbolically realized in the myth of Oedipus. Bettelheim (1984) pointed out that Freud chose to use metaphors like the Oedipus myth for their suggestiveness and referential richness. Such a metaphor was needed "to illumine and vivify a concept that defies more concise expression" (p.21). In order to understand the profound dimensions of the incestuous feelings in early childhood, it is necessary to remember the complexities of the myth's meaning. "What is most significant about Oedipus, the Oedipal situation, and the Oedipal complex," explained Bettelheim, "is not only the tragic fate that we all are projected into deep conflicts by our infantile desires, but also the need to resolve these conflicts through the difficult struggle for, and the achievement of, self-discovery" (1984, p.30).

Thus, the child's life was one of struggle, of paranoid and sadistic feelings toward a parent of whom he was dependent, all the while apparently behaving "like a perfectly reasonable member of human society" (Freud, 1909/1955, p.142). Freud was genuinely surprised by the

discovery of the emotional turmoil in Little Hans' case. This was a charming and affectionate child, "not a degenerate child, condemned by his heredity to be a neurotic" (p.142). Furthermore, this was the son of a psychologically enlightened father and a loving mother. And it was precisely the fact that he was surrounded by the refinements of civilization that intensified the young boy's conflicts. Adults are, according to Freud, unaware of "the unavoidable difficulties by which a child is confronted when in the course of his cultural training he is called upon to overcome the innate instinctual components of his mind" (1909/1955, p.143).

In Little Hans, Freud discovered the continuity between the normal and the neurotic in children. According to Anna Freud (1982), this bridging of the gap between pathology and normalcy furthered the evolution of psychoanalytic theory, which was able then to take the step from psychopathology to developmental psychology. Or, to put it in a slightly different form, pathological elements were considered essential factors in the development of a normal personality; the perversities of childhood are, with modifications, the building blocks of adult "character."

Years later, in Civilization and Its Discontents (1930/ 1961), Freud asserted that every cultural conquest has been achieved by a renunciation of instinct. In this process, unavoidable for individuals and humankind alike,

every time an instinctual trend underwent repression, its libidinal elements are turned into symptoms while its aggressive elements survived as guilt. Thus, neuroses were seen as inescapable in all development. They represented the price of becoming a civilized adult: "Under the influence of cultural urges, some civilizations, or some epochs of civilization--possibly the whole mankind--have become neurotic" (p.91).

Such a parallel as the above, between individual development and history, was a typical example of the recapitulationist elements in Freud's theory. In the 1914 preface to Three Essays (1905/1962), Freud stated expressly that "ontogenesis may be regarded as a recapitulation of phylogenesis" (p.xv). The psychology of the child was frequently utilized to illuminate that of primitive or ancient peoples. In psychoanalytical theory, the adult was seen as retaining infantile desires and the child as a manifestation of primitive and savage instincts and aggressions (Boas, 1966). The Oedipus complex, considered as the central experience of infantile sexuality in the earlier studies, was transposed later, into the historical dimension. In Totem and Taboo (1913/1938), the primitive laws prohibiting incest and the killing and mourning of the totemic animal were nothing else than the symbolic reenactment of the Oedipus complex. Primitive taboo rules are the compulsive neurosis of the modern adult. In addition,

modern religions were considered equally tied to the unresolved conflict between father and sons.

A biogenetic parallel was also established between the social ideal and the goal of individual development. Both are progressive; primitives, like children, had to subject the expression of their instincts to the constraints of an ever greater rationality, and their individual freedom to the demands of the group. Human childhood, with its prolonged helplessness in civilized context, was at the same time, for Freud, the point of origin of adult neuroses and social restrictions. In short, children, in order to grow, have to experience a thwarting inhibition of their sexuality and aggressiveness. Paradoxically, however, only through their struggle against all these restrictions could they become adult and civilized.

Freud expressed a great sympathy toward children, as well as primitives, when he urged adults to take a closer look at "the psychic life of the child, which we adults understand no better [than that of savages], and whose richness and finess of feeling we have therefore so greatly undervalued" (1938, p.883). For him, the child was the psychological father of the adult (S. Cohen, 1979).

Human beings, however, have not been exiled from the Romantic "paradise of childhood," rather they have emerged from the depths of phylogenetic memory. There they had to contend with powerful rivals who would actually rob them of

their genitals if they dared to interfere. The Freudian child has known only one brief stay in Eden, the period of prenatal life in the mother's womb.

Freudian early childhood may, thus, be summarized as a time of intense sexual passion, incest, death wishes and fear of death, hate and the desire for revenge, aggression, cruelty, and a constant perception of an imminent castration. Emotional turmoil was accompanied by intellectual disillusionment since children arrive very early "upon the discovery that all knowledge is patchwork, and that each step forward leaves an unresolved residue behind" (Freud, 1909/1955, p.100).

As central as the preoccupation with childhood was to Freudian theory, Sigmund Freud was not a child psychologist. It was his daughter, Anna Freud who pursued the study of children and developed the techniques of child analysis. She also expanded and elaborated on the educational implications of psychoanalysis. Anna Freud described her approach to developmental psychology as "the explorations of normal and abnormal child development which aim at the enumeration, description, and exploration of any interferences with optimal mental growth" (1982, p.16). She postulated, following her father's theory, the inevitability of neuroses for normal development and interpreted such disturbances "as

positive evidence of personality growth, a progression from primitive to more sophisticated reaction patterns" (p.31).

Normal development was a forward aimed succession of unpleasantnesses. The infant at birth experienced diffuse distress, "the normal forerunners of later anxiety" (p.86). The toddler lived in a world of danger caused by increasing motor skills and experienced tantrum and anxieties due to the processes of individuation and separation. Obsessions and anxieties were normal for the growing child. Anna Freud did not expect "the child to cope with the accompanying emotional complications and anxiety increases without pathological by-products" (p.88). To the paradoxical concept of normal pathologies, Anna Freud added the developmental deviations which resulted from abnormalities of the child's inborn equipment, detrimental environmental conditions, or variations of "the rate of internal structuralization."

The herculean task of growing up set before the child was emphasized by Anna Freud; enormous demands are made of children between their birth and the sixth birthday, demands to which they have to respond actively. She refuted the maturational view that held that the child only has to get bigger, stronger, older, to accomplish personality growth. On the contrary, Anna Freud affirmed, "developmental achievements are won only in hard battles...the child needs active help to make the forward steps and gradually advance

toward the final desired goals" (1982, p.321). Those who still believed in "the myth of a happy untroubled childhood," would not be able to provide this help.

The years between the World Wars witnessed the flourishing of child psychoanalysis in the practice and writings of Melanie Klein and Susan Isaacs, among others. The Freudian image of the child experienced substantial modifications of detail without a departure from the basic formulations of psychoanalytical mechanisms.

What is found in Klein and Isaacs could be called an anthropomorphization of the child. While Freud based his insights on the revelation of adult analysis, the child analysts utilized their observations of young children at play to gain an understanding of the mental life of the baby (Klein, 1963). This implied several departures from Freud. For him, the baby was all id; Klein, on the other hand, sustained that the infant acquired an ego at birth. This hypothesis placed the greatest emphasis on the period of human infancy rather than on the years between two and six.

This chronological change not only centered the pivotal conflicts of human life in the first few months of infancy, making the baby, rather than the child, "the father of the man," but it also changed the nature of the conflicts. The power and drama of the Oedipus situation as the everlasting force of life and civilization, was replaced by

Klein's theory of the primordial conflict with the mother's breast. Klein's baby was believed to be aware of "the struggle within and the influences from without" (1963, p.4); he is able to choose an object of love and fear as part of his inner world, a capacity which is "up to a point innate" (p.6). This baby also was able to project, which means that he had, according to Klein, "the capacity...to attribute to other people around him feelings of various kinds, predominately love and hate" (p.5). The infant's very survival depended, for Klein on his ability to establish trust and love towards the mother. The infant was conceptualized as a vital element of the parent-child interaction. Klein acknowledged that "external influences are of paramount importance throughout life" (p.13) but "much depends, even in the infant, on the ways in which external influences are interpreted and assimilated by the child" (p.13).

If normality ever existed in Klein's image of the child it had to be in utero. The newborn infant was described as paranoid-schizoid with the concomitant destructive feelings of greed and envy. The example given for this latter emotions exemplified the complex level of consciousness Klein attributed to the young infant:

"It is not easy to explain how the mother who feeds the infant and looks after him can also be the object of envy. But whenever he is hungry or feels neglected, the child's frustration leads to the phantasy that the milk

and love are deliberately withheld from him, or kept by the mother for her benefit" (p.10).

The infant experienced suffering, depression, and guilt combined with great love for the object (the mother), both in her frightening and her good aspects: "even the child who has a loving relation with his mother has also unconsciously a terror of being devoured, torn up and destroyed by her" (p.25).

The earlier onset of the ego in Melanie Klein's theory brought with it a modification of the nature of the superego. For Freud, the superego developed relatively late during early childhood (around the age of five) as an internalization of the father figure in the Oedipal conflict. Klein considered that the superego developed as a result of the assimilation of the terrifying aspects of the mother figure during the first few months, and was, thus, operative as a conscience capable of directing the child's behavior and producing feelings of guilt very early on in the child's life.

Susan Isaacs, a follower of Melanie Klein and probably the most widely read of the Freudian child psychologists in America, contributed to the somber conceptualization of the very young. Isaacs wrote about "the deep suffering which may be hidden behind the fair exterior of the good child" (1948, p.4). Childhood is defined as a series of disturbances of equilibrium starting with the

severest of all, birth. Isaacs described the state of mind of the infant in the following way;

"He feels helpless, both against the object which creates such love and longing and hatred, and against his own over-mastering feelings. And his love and longings and hatred and destructive fury may bring about an overwhelming dread of helplessness, of dependence upon loved objects, and a stifling of any feelings of love (1948, p.94-95).

Freud's biologism constituted the basis of his firm belief, or stubborn conviction as Herberg (1957) has called it, that struggle and conflict are constitutive to man and are not a consequence of environmental circumstances. Therefore, optimistic views of perfectibility, social reform, and utopian illusion, so basic to American educational thought, were alien to Freudian theory. Murphy (1957) contrasted the idea of the powerful and life-long influence of instinctual forces, constantly in need of check by the ego, with the ideas of James and Dewey "who found a rational and organized ego a perfectly natural expression of evolutionary human development" (p.116).

American parents were interested in Freud's ideas about children to a greater degree than teachers. Freud had stated that childrearing practices, rather than education, exerted "a powerful influence for good or for evil upon the predisposition" (1909/1955, p.145). Like all innovators, Freud was critical of current practices: "in bringing up children we aim only at being left in peace and having no

difficulties, in short, in training up a model child, and we pay very little attention to whether such a course of development is for the child's good as well" (p.146). Although Freud was aware, as has been pointed out, of the need to restrain the instinctual forces in order to achieve a civilized stage, he opposed the traditional inhibitory education and asked that it "should strive at making the individual capable of becoming a civilized and useful member of society with the least possible sacrifice to his own activity" (p.146).

The application of psychoanalytical theory to education resulted in more negative than positive precepts. Jones (1910) summarized the psychoanalytical view of mental life as the interaction of inherited instincts and environmental restrictions. The resulting conflicts impose on the young child sacrifices "much more considerable than is commonly supposed" (p.501). Therefore "the main aim of education should be not the mere addition of something, e.g. knowledge, to the child but the ordering of the influences that act on him in such a way as to allow the freest scope possible for the development of those capacities that will make him a useful citizen" (p.506).

This liberating view of pedagogy, which went largely unheeded in America, recommended "gradually weaning the child to social interests instead of forcibly suppressing and forbidding the primitive ones" (p.507). It considered

that the most important commandment was that "we have to learn to stop doing harm" (p.520).

In spite of Jones' early (1910) paper on psychoanalysis and education, the first generation of psychoanalysts, all of then male, were not eager to pursue the specific study of the child, as S. Cohen (1979) has pointed out. The field was left open to a group of teachers, mostly women, who combined theory with educational practice.

Among them, Anna Freud who in the early 1930s presented a series of lectures at the invitation of Viennese childcare teachers. These lectures appeared in translation as Psychoanalysis for Parents and Teachers (1935/1954). In them, she expressed the need to limit education since "psychoanalysis has brought before us the quite definite danger arising from education" (1935/1954, p.96). This was taken by many as the sanction of permissiveness. The extreme exponent of this attitude was Frank Wittels who urged parents "to leave...children to themselves. Do not educate them, for you cannot educate them." And in a Romantic vein he added that "we have heard much about 'the century of the child' but that century will not begin until grown-ups realize that children have less to learn from their parents than they have to learn from their children" (quoted in S. Cohen, 1979, p.215).

In the 1950s this was considered the lesson Freud had taught parents and teachers. To the great disappoint-

ment of its advocates, education based on this misunderstanding of Freud's ideas did not produce happy and productive children. According to S. Cohen (1979), "the picture of the child who had only to be spared mishandling to grow into untroubled and joyous adulthood, was a Froebelian dream" (p.205), it was not part of Freud's theory.

A closer reading of psychoanalytical theory would have precluded such conclusions. Anna Freud (1935/1954) had pointed out the damage caused by the lack of restriction on children's instinctual life; the actual fulfillment of childhood wishes tends to short-circuit the process of development and makes growing up impossible. Her recommendation was to search for balance: "allow to each stage in the child's life, the right proportion of instinct gratification and instinct restriction" (p.105).

Lili Peller, a friend and follower of Anna Freud, considered permissiveness equivalent to intentional neglect "as in certain brands of progressive education or in misunderstood psychoanalytical education" (1978, p.104). As opposed to "the educational moratorium" declared by some progressivists, the psychoanalytical educator, "is lenient in order to win as his ally the full force of the child's own wish to grow up" (italics in the original) (p.76). The child was neither the self-developing organism the Romantics saw nor the moldable entity of the behaviorists or the object of pragmatic socialization. Anna Freud believed that

children needed support to master their instinctual manifestations but no educational intervention could save them from the succession of inward crisis which constituted the very nature of their development.

Melanie Klein also warned about a misinterpretation of Freud and stated that "too great indulgence may be almost as harmful for the child as too much restraint...it is essential to keep a balance between too much and too little discipline" (1963, p.13-14). Furthermore, undisciplined children experienced guilt feelings that threatened their sense of security.

Around the 1920s, psychoanalysis became a part of the theoretical background of the nursery school. The life of the child was defined as an area of "conflicts between primitive life impulses and the traditions of the society of which he is a member" (Grace Owen, quoted in Forest, 1927, p.213). The idealized concept of the "good" child was considered obsolete and the dangers of "goodness" were pointed out. Wolfheim (1953) observed that the child "is not as good and free from fault as we liked to believe from our own wishful imaginings" (p.17), therefore adults needed to regard instinctual renunciation as a necessity and would demand an adaptation to reality from the child. The balancing element to these demands was given by the emphasis on play as a diagnostic and therapeutic tool of early childhood education. It is at this point that, in practice,

although only at a severe cost to psychoanalytic theory, Gesellian mental hygiene and Freudian analysis met and hybridized.

Susan Isaacs defined early education as a therapeutic process since "emotional troubles of one sort or another are general and normal in the early years of childhood" (1948, p.49). At a time when the inculcation of good habits had become again the goal of education, Isaacs reminded adults that "no method based on the notion that the little child is a simple bodily machine or a mere creature of habit and reflex response can sustain him in his deepest difficulties" (p.62). She opposed permissiveness, like Anna Freud, Klein, and Peller and argued that "the right use of the prestige and power of the grown-up in maintaining justice and order and in fostering constructive impulses is as necessary to the child as is the chance to assert himself in appropriate ways" (p.64). The recommendation was, again, balance: "the grown-ups who are tending little children need to have a sense of fitness and proportion, to know when to give and when to withhold, when to see the baby in the child, and when to respond to the man he is to be" (p.65). To say that Freudian theory conceptualized the child as a simpler being or an immature adult as Weber (1984) believed, constitutes a unfortunate oversimplification.

It is necessary at this point to step back chronologically and rejoin American early childhood educators at the time of Freud's visit (1909) in order to examine the indigenous reactions to his theory. In fact, Freudian ideas experienced considerable reinterpretation and the ensuing share of misinterpretation in the process of American naturalization. Orthodox Freudian psychoanalysis as a body of knowledge and as a concept of the child, never became a part of the mainstream of American educational thought.

This fact can be attributed, in part, to what Shakow and Rapoport (1968) described as the preoccupation of American psychology with the principles of scientific method and experimental design, as a result of which the validity of Freudian theories was often questioned. A second American belief has proved to be a more important obstacle: the assumption that the child is born with infinite potentialities which can be actualized by a benign environment. Any defects which later appear are seen as a consequence of adult ineptness which interfered with what would otherwise be an optimal development (S. Cohen, 1979, p.210). Hale (1971) noted also that Americans preferred straightforward methods of prevention or of effective resolution of conflicts, rather than the notoriously slow and involved psychoanalytical method.

On the other hand, American psychoanalytic scholarship tended to emphasize Freud's environmentalism, expressed

in the 1909 Clark University lectures but abandoned by him shortly after. Where Americans optimistically saw a forward movement of progress through scientific and technological achievements, Freud detected conflict as an inescapable aspect of the evolutionary process. American psychoanalysts, to a large degree, were unable to relinquish the belief in the innate innocence of children. They placed extraordinary stress on the socializing function of the Oedipus complex. And, in their fervor of denying the sensual nature of the child, they defined him as an amoral being in need of help in order to outgrow his autoerotic habits.

At the time of the Froebelian debate between conservatives and liberals, the main representative of the former, Susan Blow, made brief contact with Freud's ideas (Shapiro, 1983). She was attracted by what she considered a dualistic understanding of the self in search of unity. Hegelianism and Froebelianism were intertwined with her sketchy knowledge about psychoanalysis. Shapiro (1983) pointed out that Blow's later discovery of Freud's theory of infantile sexuality reminded her too much of the doctrine of innate depravity and she discarded the new ideas altogether. In Susan Blow's mind the Froebelian image of the child, innocent of sensuality and morally pure, remained triumphant.

The environmentalist bent of American psychoanalysis placed great importance on parental influence on the child's development and, correspondingly, attributed a degree of passivity to the child. W. A. White (1919) denied the importance of hereditary or innate influences and believed they were pretexts that served to block efforts of improvement. In early childhood, White saw "both the material for therapeutic effort and the golden period of educational possibilities" (1919, p.53). The area of first experiences "offers the field in which mental hygiene is operative" (p.89). None of the Freudian drama had survived in White's interpretation.

Another American obsession, socialization, contributed further to transform Freud's theory. A. A. Brill, one of the earliest American psychoanalysts, was mentioned appreciatively by Freud (1914/1966) for drawing the Americans' attention "to the easily observable fundamental facts of every day life, of dreams and neuroses" (p.32) and for the translation of many of Freud's writings. Nevertheless, Brill departed significantly from Freud's theory and often expressed naturalistic rather than a psychoanalytical views. Brill considered the child as "a primitive being" or "a little animal," but always a stubbornly asocial being. Only adult influence would be able to turn the child into a civilized human being; "we try to make a child do what it would not do if left by itself" (1921, p.15). According to

Brill, the child was only a Lockean blank slate; with little or no contribution on her part, the child's future depended entirely upon the nature of her early impressions. Thus, it was the role of the psychoanalyst to educate the parent rather than the child in order "to prevent nervous or mental diseases" (1921, p.21).

Psychoanalytical theory found limited educational application in a few experimental schools, mainly in New York. One of these was Walden School, started by Margaret Naumburg "with the purpose of applying the principles of analytic psychology to the education of normal children" (1928, p.44). She wanted to create "the right type of environment for the release of the unconscious emotional life of children into positive and personal expression" (p.46).

Naumburg discarded the Rousseauian idea "that we can right ourselves by simply removing certain limiting trammels of civilization" (p.251). Therefore she did not fall into the naive permissiveness that characterized so many other progressives. Naumburg shared Freud's idea of education as "an incitement to the conquest of the pleasure principle, and to its replacement by the reality principle" (p.207). She insisted on discipline and work while, at the same time, fostering children's artistic and intellectual creativity.

Instead of the pessimistic Freudian view of the child, Naumburg chose to look at children with the constitutive optimism of the educator. She emphasized the "energetic force" of the child's inner life and defined it as imagination and creativity, the most important factors, not only for the individual but also for society. It is necessary to note that at the time when Naumburg wrote that "civilization...is the result of infinite transformations of our primal energies into higher forms of cultural expressions" (p.208), Freud had not yet published his reflections about the price of cultural achievements in Civilization and Its Discontents (1930/1961). This may explain Naumburg's rather unproblematic consideration of the civilizing process.

For Naumburg, the worst threat to the inner life of the child was represented by "the excessive bonds of parental attachment" (p.208), a common occurrence in some unenlightened families. In her interpretation of parent-child relationships, a measure of behavioristic distrust of emotions contributed to distort the primordial nature of the Oedipus conflict and turn it into a pathological manifestation of maladjusted adults. This simplification of the inner life of the child permitted Naumburg to organize her school, with the help of a psychologist and a psychoanalytically trained physician, as the therapeutic

solution necessary for some children because of their urban or small-family maladjustments.

Cremin (1964) aptly described the limited impact Freudian ideas have made on education when he remarked that "however much the Greenwich Village intelligentsia may have enthused over 'the new psychology,' most teachers remained ignorant of its technicalities, having been educated in the doctrines of connectionism" (p.214). Psychoanalytical theory, however, influenced American early childhood education in at least two indirect ways. The work of John Bowlby on maternal attachment stated that a child required the close and loving care of one person, preferably the mother, to become a secure and competent adult. Based on the Freudian concept of infant anxiety as a manifestation of the child's psychic helplessness, Bowlby's theory also utilized the parallelism Freud drew between the fear of castration and the separation from the mother.

Bowlby made sure that his ideas became popularized by publishing a childcare manual for parents in 1953. From then on, and to this day, in the crusade of Burton White against non-familial child care for the early years, the child's development is looked upon by many as the exclusive product of the primary caregiver's devotion. The child was not given more credit than as the passive recipient of the

adult's ministrations; attachment was not seen as much different from the ethologist's imprinting.

A second, and maybe more important, avenue of influence for psychoanalytic theory, was represented by the ideas of Erik H. Erikson, a student and collaborator of Anna Freud in her educational experiments in Vienna. Erikson wrote one of the most eloquent summaries of Freud's idea of the child. Not only did Freud reveal the conflictual nature of childhood but

"he also pointed to what is so largely and so regularly lost in the conflict: he spoke of 'the child's radiant intelligence'--the naive zest, the natural courage, the unconditional faith of childhood which are submerged by fearful teachings and by limited and limiting information. In teaching us to recognize the daimonic evil in children, he urged us not to smother the creatively good... (1957, p.100-101).

Ironically, Erikson's own image of the child differed substantially from that of Freud. It has been said that Erikson transformed Freud's psychosexual conflicts into psychosocial ones (Weber, 1984). Others observed that the difference derived from the subject selected for study: while Freud focused on the neurotic personality, Erikson was interested in healthy human development (Thomas, 1985). Wolman (1984) pointed out that "while Freud's personality model is transcultural, Erikson's personality theory and his theory of developmental stages are closely related to the

American society and its culture" (p.206). The last observation may explain Erikson's lasting and pervasive influence on early childhood educational theory in the United States.

Erikson's reinterpretation of Freud had retained many psychoanalytical concepts and some of the terminology but it has radically changed the definition of the child. The mythic struggle each child had to face anew and alone was transformed, by Erikson, into a problem of social dynamics. The child faced successive crises but the success or failure in mastering them depended in great degree on the adults around him. The child's stature as the builder of his own destiny was considerably diminished. As in Bowlby's view, the young child was essentially passive and reactive.

Kagan (1984) pointed out that the ideological demands of political liberalism of the 1950s dictated a greater psychological distance between animals and humans. Therefore, social experience rather than inherited instincts or drives were considered, at that time, the source of personality development. Because society, and not biology, was formative, the theorist could see "the actively feeding infant as a passively fed child and [could] transform a solitary instinctive behavior into a social event" (Kagan, 1984, p.28).

Erikson defined childhood as "a gradual unfolding of the personality through phase-specific psychosocial crisis" (quoted in Wolman, 1984, p.206). The child began life as a

highly plastic collection of instinctual patterns which are the raw materials for child training; "man survives only where traditional child training provides him with a conscience that will guide him without crushing him and which is firm and flexible enough to fit the vicissitudes of his historical era" (1963, p.95). In other words, the child was conceptualized as the product of sociohistoric forces which she, in turn, will have an opportunity to influence, but only if she was able to resolve successfully each of the developmental stages.

Adults, especially the mother, were considered instrumental in providing children with a sense of identity. With increasing age, the circle of providers of identity expanded; development became, more and more, a matter of socialization and acculturation. Erikson emphasized the dependency of the child who "because of his immature equipment, has no way of differentiating between inner and outer, real and imagined, dangers: he has to learn this, and while he learns, he needs the adult's reassuring instruction" (1963, p.408).

Also, the extension of development and its stages over the whole span of human life, robbed childhood of its monopoly on growth and change. In such a framework, childhood stood simply for the smaller, the incomplete, the weak. In his later writings, Erikson expressed with great

clarity the American ideal of autonomy and potency, of which childhood, of course, is the antithesis (Kagan, 1984).

CHAPTER IX

THE COGNITIVE CHILD

THE IDEA OF THE CHILD IN BALDWIN, PIAGET, AND VYGOTSKY

Susan Blow, the ardent defender of conservative Froebelianism, enlisted "the very illuminating discussion of Professor Baldwin" (1908, p.196) in her polemics against G. S. Hall in particular, and against all kindergarten innovations in general. The work alluded to is James Mark Baldwin's, Mental Development in the Child and the Race (1894). Relatively unknown to educators today, Baldwin was briefly a familiar name to kindergartners at the turn of the century. He was even appointed to a child-study committee in 1896 (with John Dewey and W. T. Harris) as one of the guides and philosophers for the kindergarten movement (Shapiro, 1983).

Although cognitive psychology is a discipline primarily associated with Europe and Jean Piaget, the first cognitive children were born in America and they were the daughters of J. M. Baldwin. This happened during those intellectually fertile years around the turn of the century; Baldwin's career as a psychologist was in ascendancy until in 1908, when he was expelled from the university and the country because of a personal incident. He went into exile in Mexico and later Europe, where he lived and worked until his death in 1934. When Baldwin left the academic scene in 1908, American psychology was already committed to the

narrow-gauge empirical epistemology which, according to Gruber (1982), did justice neither to children nor to scientists. Baldwin's work caused "a slight flurry among philosophers and was steadfastly and monotonously ignored by psychologists [in America]" (Kessen, 1965, p.165).

His ideas, however, had fallen on fertile ground, if not in America, in Geneva and in the Soviet Union (Wozniak, 1982). Although Piaget had adopted much of Baldwin's terminology, especially in the understanding of the infant, he was not "his true intellectual successor" as Kessen (1965) stated it. Baldwin's biosocial, genetic theory of intelligence survived, richly elaborated, in the work of A. R. Luria and L. S. Vygotsky. Fifty years after Baldwin's death, his central role in the development of psychology as a discipline is slowly being rediscovered. But in spite of an extensive philosophical oeuvre that continues to provide fresh insights into issues of fundamental contemporary importance, Baldwin has not experienced yet a real resurrection (Broughton & Freeman-Moir, 1982).

Baldwin began his career as an experimental psychologist but soon grew disillusioned by the aridity of tables and graphs. A statistical method could not illuminate the central problem that preoccupied him, the attempt to come to grips with the relationship between reason and material reality (Wozniak, 1982). He turned, later in his life, to the study of philosophy. But before that, the birth of his

daughters Helen and Elizabeth in 1889 and 1891 added a decisive element to the construction of his psychological thought, namely the realization that reason was a lawfully evolving capacity of the human mind: "Man grows by certain laws; his progress is conditioned by the environment, both physical and social, in which he lives; his mind is part of the natural system of things" (1901, p.24).

Thus, the relationship between biology and psychology or, more specifically, how a biological theory of evolution might be applied to the mind, was the topic that preoccupied Baldwin during the 1890s. He believed that there must be some deep systematic resemblance between the principles of evolution and the principles of mind (White, 1983a) and he addressed the question of whether "what is present in the mind now, in the way of function, is due somehow to the past" (1894, p.27). Baldwin believed that psychology should be able to explain the role of individuals in evolution by providing, through ontogenetic observations, the missing links in phylogenesis.

As an evolutionist with strong Lamarckian leanings, Baldwin was bothered by the Darwinian role of chance in natural selection and by Darwin's neglect of ontogenesis and individual behavior as factors in evolution (Piaget, 1976/1978). Consequently, Baldwin became a "nursery psychologist" hoping to discover "a possible synthesis of

the current biological theory of organic adaptation with the doctrine of the infant's development" (1894, p.vii).

Firmly based on evolutionary theory, Baldwin approached the mind, not as a fixed substance, but as developing activity. Since he was also a good empiricist, he decided that, since the beginnings of the child's life were "so low in the scale in the matter of instinctive and mental endowment" (1894, p.5), the newborn would make a good point of departure for the study of the mind. The conceptualization of the child as originally simple, as starting from zero, made genetic epistemology possible, an idea and a terminology for which Baldwin, decades before Piaget, deserved the credit.

Baldwin found children interesting "since our common humanity reacts with greater geniality upon the little ones, in whom we instinctively see innocence and simplicity" (1901, p.51). Here innocence is used in the etymological sense of "not knowing." The child's consciousness is uncomplicated,

"[his] emotion is as spontaneous as a spring...he has not learned his own importance, his pedigree, his beauty, his social place, his religion, his paternal disgrace; and he has not observed himself through all these and countless other lenses of time, place, and circumstance. He has not yet turned himself into an idol nor the world into a temple; and we can study him apart from the complex accretions which are the later deposits of his self-consciousness" (1894, p.4).

When very young, animals and children were deemed equally appropriate subjects for the study of the mind since the animal "has as good a right to recognition, as a mind-bearing creature, as the child, and if we exclude him we should also exclude the child" (1901, p.25). But, in the long run, the study of children would be more valuable than that of animals because "the latter never become men, while children do" (p.6).

Baldwin's recapitulationism proposed the study of the cognitive development of children as an ontogeny of mind related to the phylogenetical development of consciousness. In the preface of his 1894 work, Baldwin stated that "the relations of individual development to race [species] development are so intimate--the two are so identical, in fact--that no topic in the one can be treated with great clearness without assuming results in the other" (p.viii). But in contrast to the minute, and often naive, parallelisms between species and individuals extensively compiled by Chamberlain (1902) and criticized by Gould (1977), Baldwin (1894) proposed two important modifications. Firstly, habits and accommodations permit, or lead to, certain " 'short-cuts' --the omission in future descendants of certain elements or stages which were necessary in the progress of their ancestors" (p.20-21). The second modification Baldwin considered necessary to recapitulation was the study of the evolutionary function of infancy.

The shortcut hypothesis maintained that while the organism developed serially in regular stages, the particular stages in the individual's growth may represent later phylogenetic stages without having passed through all the earlier stages. Children, for example, passed from the sensorimotor stage, a lower stage than the instinctual, directly to the volitional stage:

"The child, in his own growth, cannot develop instincts for the performance of activities which he is also to learn to perform voluntarily; for the acquisition of volition involves the use in new forms of the very elements which would be held fast in the fixed reflexes of instinct. He is accordingly born a human infant without developed instincts, not a brute with them" (1894, p.288).

Strict recapitulationists, like G. S. Hall for example, considered that children necessarily passed through a stage of instinctual life, later losing these instincts when their behavior became governed by will.

Baldwin's emphasis on the shattering or bursting of the instincts became also a central concern of Piaget's epistemological thought. Piaget wrote that with the bursting of the instincts in anthropoids and man "a new cognitive evolution begins, and it begins all over again from zero, since the inner apparatus of instincts has gone" (1967/1971b, p.367). For Piaget as for Baldwin, evolution was a matter of ontogeny. The important role of infancy, from the pre-natal period and through the long time of dependency, derived, according to Baldwin, from this absence

of instincts. If mental gifts are not crystallized in instincts, they "require a long ontogenic evolution in each individual" (1894, p.30). In short, creatures of instincts represented a long phylogeny, creatures of intelligence, a long ontogeny. In ontogeny, the individual organism acquired great importance and the variation in mental development was "the only means to human progress--the only supply of material for the selection of the fittest under the action of a progressive social environment" (p.33).

Baldwin proceeded cautiously, however. The propositions of the relationship between ontogeny and phylogeny were to be taken as hypothesis since comparative mental embryology and morphology were non-existent as scientific disciplines. In an all too obvious criticism of the facile generalizations of the Child Study movement, he wondered "how can we compare the development of the infant with that of the animal series, when we know neither how the child develops, nor what is actually taking place in his consciousness, in any great detail, at any stage to which he may have developed?" (1894 p.35). His major criticism of the fad of child observation by parents and teachers that raged during the 1890s, was its deliberate lack of a theoretical framework. "On the contrary," Baldwin exclaimed, "give us theories, theories, always theories! Let every man who has a theory pronounce his theory! This is just the difference between the average mother and the good psychologists--she

has no theories, he has; he has no interests, she has" (1894, p.38).

As a good psychologist, and presumably with "interests" too, he approached the developmental study of the mind through the detailed observation of his daughters' growth. His topics were varied, color perception, right-handedness, among others, but the common purpose was to record the progressive sophistication of the child's control over the environment. In his observations, Baldwin sketched a child who not only knew more and reflected more as she grew up but who gradually became more autonomous and liberated (White, 1983a). Methodologically, Baldwin moved away from the study of unobservable facts and tried to create a behavioristic psychology. White (1983a) pointed out that, in a field full of sensory introspectionists, Baldwin dared to proclaim that psychology ought to be studying the structure of children's action.

The mind's development, argued Baldwin, was observable from birth on, well before the emergence of speech. Cognitive growth was revealed through the infants' reactions. Thus, "a sympathetic insight into their mental movement" (p.49) should be able to detect and interpret the mind's subtle responses in the child's physical movements. And the first "suggestions" or influences, defined as "the abrupt entrance from without into consciousness of an idea, or image, or a vaguely conscious stimulation" (p.106), are

also movements, moving things and especially, persons; all elements of development, then, are observable phenomena.

Baldwin speculated that consciousness in its earliest form, must be an undifferentiated sensation of touch experienced before birth. Shortly after birth the child begins to connect his impressions and show an incipient memory. Things affect her in the form of pain or pleasure. Gradually through "double touch", the two sensations experienced when she touches her own body, she recognizes the boundaries between herself and the world around her. Through the child's movements, the observable method of cognitive growth, "we find him going through a series of remarkable adaptations to his environment" (1901, p.27). In the short time of the first month of life, infants developed from random discharges and reflexes to the first manifestations of "acquired Habit."

Infants react and learn the regularity of people's behavior but soon they also become aware of the element of uncertainty. From this uncertainty, children abstract a sense of agency or power. Soon children become "capricious", that is, they try to exercise power. At this point, the child faced for the first time a social issue, obedience: "it means the subjection of his own agency, his own liberty to be capricious, to the liberty and agency of someone else" (p.125).

The extraordinary adaptiveness of the young child was reflected in the early formation of habits. Baldwin recommended an "inviolable regularity" (1901, p.78) as the basic childcare principle for the first few months of the infant's life; "under this treatment he will become as 'obstinate' in being 'good' as the opposite so-called indulgent or capricious treatment always makes him at being 'bad' " (1901, p.78).

In his second year, the child learned to abstract the regularity of the apparently unpredictable in the people he knows. Therefore, he was now able to anticipate people's behavior. The child's reactions were still all motoric; "the emotional life is budding forth in a variety of promising traits, the material of conscious character is present; but the 'ribs' of mental structure may still be seen through, response answering to appeal in a complex but yet mechanical way. The child lacks self-consciousness, self-decision, self in any form" (1894, p.127).

The cognitive activities of the child began during the second half of the first year of life. The first half had been taken up with "the vegetative functions," a prolongation of intrauterine life, a time during which "the machinery of heredity is working itself out in a new individual" (1894, p.294). But now, at six or seven months, imitation began; first the infant tried to imitate sounds and movements with no apparent aim. Later, he engaged in

what Baldwin termed "persistent imitation," an activity that showed the presence of will or conscious goal. The child imitated to learn, to improve, to master.

Baldwin placed this second cognitive turning point at about the beginning of the second year; now "he gets the idea that imitation is the way to learn, and turns all his efforts into imitations experimentally carried out" (1901, p.79). Children are more imitative than most animals because human life is one of acquisitions and adjustments. Like Piaget, Baldwin argued that the child was born "with a more 'broken up' or mobile nervous organization, because his immediate ancestors have had full consciousness and volition, whose function is to secure new adaptations" (1894, p.297). A long infancy and a relative helplessness provide the appropriate conditions for the acquisition of these higher conscious adaptations.

The child was for Baldwin, as for Piaget and Vygotsky, an active learner. "We find him constantly learning, modifying his habits, refining his ways of doing things, becoming possessed of quite new and complex functions, such as speech, handwriting, etc." (1901, p.37); "the child is par excellence, the animal that learns" (1894, p.297). Baldwin formulated laws of cognitive growth that anticipated, and influenced, Piaget. Through play and imitation the child established "assimilative nets" (p.325); new accommodations, derived from new experiences, promoted

the formation of new class notions which expanded the existing schemes. Children possessed the ability to generalize, "to take up certain general attitudes which will answer for a great many details of experience" (1901, p.41).

This ability to generalize from experience "gives man the magnificent advantage over animals which he has" (1901, p.42). While the animal is tied down by his experience, the child "very quickly begins to use symbols, words being the symbols of first importance to him" (p.42). Through language, the child not only gained access to the conceptual realm of abstraction but also through speech as a means of social communication, he acquired the cultural tools for his intellectual development.

Although children were defined as active, self-motivated beings, adults were seen as important forces in their development. Baldwin observed that

"it is not only likely--it is inevitable--that [the child] make up his personality, under limitations of heredity, by imitation, out of the 'copy' set in the actions, temper, emotions, of the persons who build around him the social enclosure of his childhood" (1894, p.357).

There was a special characteristic of the very young child, which Baldwin emphasized to a greater degree than Piaget, and that was the remarkably early tendency to recognize subtle differences of personality among those who attend to his needs. Persons were, from the beginning, more important to the infant than things; "it learns

characteristic methods of holding, taking up, patting, kissing, etc., and adapts itself, by a marvelous accuracy of protestation or acquiescence, to these personal variations" (1901, p.81). This orientation toward other human beings constituted, for Baldwin, the origin of the child's sense of personality.

Thus the child constructed his self-consciousness through the information which he derived about persons together with the sense of his own capacity for action and his private feelings of pleasure and pain. The self is not inborn; "on the contrary, it is gradually built up in the child's mind from the same material exactly as that of which he makes up his thought of other persons" (1901, p.89). At this point, Baldwin established the crucial link between the sense of self and the social sense. For Baldwin they were inseparable: "the bond between you and me is not an artificial one; it is natural as is the recognition of personal individuality" (p.91). The child, Baldwin argued "is bound up with others from the start by the very laws of his growth. The child cannot be selfish only nor generous only; he may seem to be this or that, in this circumstance or that, but he is really social all the time" (p.91).

It is this idea that explains the connection with Vygotsky; social relationships were essential for both the cognitive as well as the moral development of the child. Moreover, Baldwin held that the social and the individual

completely interpenetrate one another in development. White (1983a) pointed out that Baldwin's subtle dialectical interplay through which subject becomes object and object becomes subject was best approximated by Vygotsky's writings. White also observed that Hegel was influential on both Baldwin and the Soviet psychologist. In contrast, Piaget sees individual and society as discontinuous; he would later (1967/1971b) say that trying to assess their relative importance "is probably like that of trying to decide which comes first the chicken or the egg" (p.368).

There was not such a dilemma for Baldwin; he warned about the danger of studying individuals in isolation. The child is indissolubly part of human society;

"the antithesis...between the self and the world is not a valid antithesis psychologically considered. The self is realized by taking in 'copies' from the world, and the world is enabled to set higher copies only through the constant reactions of the individual self upon it" (1894, p.488).

Children can only be studied in their social context. They are the product of what Baldwin called social heredity, or the accumulated wisdom of society, which is in itself "a growing and shifting thing" (1901, p.206). Therefore the child's development was interpreted as imitation and learning, but "learning not by himself and at random, but under the leading of the social conditions which surround him" (1901, p.207). Children grew up balancing the

elements of conformity and the personal acceptance of the rules of social life with those of initiative and individual influence on society.

Piaget was exposed to Baldwin's ideas through the lectures of Pierre Janet and the conversations with Claparede, who had become a personal friend of Baldwin. In 1979, Piaget acknowledged the great influence the American psychologist had on him. When J. J. Voneche (Piaget, 1979/1982) interviewed Piaget on the subject, he spoke of a convergence of thinking, a coincidence of interests. Indeed, it is a fact that Piaget had formulated his thought, in a relatively finished form, in his early biological papers. Therefore it was not an issue of influences and borrowings but one of continuity, in spite of the difference in emphasis. The common theme shared by Baldwin and Piaget focused on the nature of the relationship between all forms of behavior and the evolution of life in general. The elucidation of this relationship, conceived as lawful, confronted the Darwinian idea of chance variations with the idea that behavior was a determinant, as well as a result, of evolution.

This vast and ambitious theoretical construct provided the framework for the study of the child as the manifestation of evolutionary laws. Baldwin's notion of an "organic selection" based on the activity of the organism as

it tried to "accommodate" to new contexts preoccupied Piaget (1976/1978) throughout his long and productive life. At the same time, Piaget confronted, in the study of the human mind, the philosophical battle between the rationalists who advocated structure without genesis, and the empiricists who advocated genesis without structure. Also in this aspect, he was "deeply influenced" by Baldwin's work on genetic logic (Piaget, 1967/1971b, p.xxi). Piaget wanted to demonstrate in the development of the child the genesis or construction of the Kantian a priori categories of thought, an apparent contradiction that, according to Garfield (1983), Piaget resolved through Hegelian dialectics. And Piaget, as a good biologist, stood unremittingly on the side of the structuralists (Kessen, 1965).

The conjunction of biology and philosophy was characteristic of all of Piaget's work; he decided to dedicate his life to the study of the biological explanation of knowledge long before he became interested in the observation of children (Kessen, 1965). For Piaget "cognitive functions are an extension of organic regulations and constitute a differentiated organ for regulating exchanges with the external world" (1976/1978, p.369) or, as Baldwin had expressed it, "mind is nature's greatest accommodating agent" (1894, p.235).

The massive criticism of which Piagetian research has been the object, has often ignored the fact that Piaget

tried to answer epistemological questions rather than psychological ones (Modgil, Modgil, & Brown, 1984). Piaget (1976/1978) was describing the evolutionary role of the child when he affirmed that "a good proportion of the accommodations destined to initiate new genotypes are the outcome of initiatives taken during ontogenesis...these initiatives are not preformed but constitute genuine innovations...(p.23). Since the sources of organic selection were sought far back in ontogeny, childhood became an active collaborator in evolution: evolution is "pedogenic" (p.24). Implicit in this theory was the value-laden, almost ethical conception of behavior. "It is of the essence of behavior," Piaget affirmed, "that it strives to improve and hence to transcend itself" (p.142-143).

In his search for an understanding of the mechanisms of evolution, Piaget studied the Sedum album, Limnae ovata, and children. In his hands, child psychology turned into genetic epistemology; the child became the object of study, not for his own sake, but in order to observe the developmental processes that underlie the mental functions. Piaget stated that "the child is of considerable interest in himself, but interest in psychological investigations of the child is increased when we realize that the child explains the man as well and often better than the man explains the child" (Piaget & Inhelder, 1966/1969, p.ix).

Two rather different, and almost opposed, images of the child emerge from a careful reading of Piaget's works. His first subjects were preschool and young schoolchildren whom he studied for his work on language and thought written in 1923. It was only after the publication of that work that he became acquainted with infants when his first child was born in 1925.

In The Language and Thought of the Child (1923/1971a), Piaget studied young children's logic and found it wanting. Claparede, in the preface to the first edition, captured Piaget's reaction to the observation of children when he wrote that "if philosophers and biologists have bent their interest upon the soul of the child, it is because of the initial surprise they experienced at his logic and speech" (Piaget, 1923/1971a, p.ix).

The central surprise of the study was the discovery of children's "intellectual ego-centrism." Although Piaget admitted that the expression was "an ill-chosen one" (1971a, p.xxiii), he often defended the use of the word as a technical term, removed from "moral" popular associations (Piaget & Inhelder, 1966/1969, p.61 and p.118). Since egocentrism characterized the early Piagetian image of the young child, it is necessary to analyze its meaning from Piaget's descriptions of children in Language and Thought (1923/1971a).

In this book, his first psychological work, Piaget drew the picture of the child as an island, the child as a cognitive alien speaking a foreign language (Elkind, 1979). Children in a group barely connected; each child was involved in his or her own monologue or soliloquy and solitary games were the most frequent activity. The intent of the book seemed to be to show "how little a child is concerned with speaking to anyone in particular, or even making himself heard" (1923/1971a, p.18). The young child lived in "the absence of any sustained social intercourse" (p.40). Piaget believed that, at this stage, individual and society as concepts do not apply. Through the observation of childhood language, Piaget came to the conclusion that

"the child is neither individualized, since he cannot keep a single thought secret, and since everything done by one member of the group is repeated through a sort of imitative repercussion by almost every other member, nor is he socialized, since this imitation is accompanied by what may properly be called an interchange of thought, about half the remarks made by children being ego-centric in character" (p.41).

Besides the obvious question that it may suggest about the nature of the other half of children's remarks, this passage is notable for the way in which Piaget reinterpreted the nature of imitation, a key concept in Baldwin's social definition of the child. While Baldwin maintained that imitation permitted the child to find out "the real identity...of all possible thoughts of self, whether

yourself, myself, or some one else's self" (1901, p.91), Piaget did not believe the child capable of that inference. Imitation is "a confusion by which the child does not know that he is imitating, but plays his game as though it were his own creation" (1923/1971a, p.12). In other words, while the child is imitating what he observes, "he plays in an individualistic manner with material that is social. Such is egocentrism" (1932/1965, p.37).

Logical thought in the young child was, for Piaget, best described by its uncommunicability, "a constitutive feature of profound significance for the shape and structure which reasoning may assume" (p.48). Intellectually isolated, children were not concerned if they were not understood: "each child has his own world of hypotheses and solutions which he has never communicated to anyone...[he] is actually not conscious of concepts and definitions which he can nevertheless handle when thinking for himself" (p.79). According to Piaget, children were insensible to contradiction and made no effort to stick to one opinion.

Furthermore, Piaget seemed to attribute to children a mischievous need or intention to deceive when he states that "the child has a hundred and one ways of pretending to understand, and often complicates things still further by pretending not to understand, by inventing answers, for instance, to questions which he has understood perfectly well" (p.76).

In his early work, Piaget saw young children not so much as in the process of constructing their logical substructures, but suffering of certain delusions "similar to Dementia Praecox and other pathological cases" (1923/1971a, p.101). Surrounded by adults

"who not only know much more than they do, but who also do everything in their power to understand them, who even anticipate their thoughts and desires,...children do not take the trouble to express themselves clearly, do not even take the trouble to talk, convinced as they are that the other person knows as much or more as they do, and that he will immediately understand..." (p.101-102).

The analysis of early logic betrayed a certain impatience in Piaget for the child's apparent lack of "intelligence". The young child's mind was syncretic, that is "he can perceive nothing but general schemas which engender this perpetual conviction that everything is connected with everything else" (p.148). In Piaget's value system, rational, analytical thought, fully and clearly communicable is the summum bonum and the distinguishing characteristic of the normal adult, a daring assumption in itself.

It is not surprising then, that he so often linked children's thought to pathological or primitive reasoning. Like "the savage" or "the imbecile", young children "fly from analysis and [are] satisfied with general schemas of an individual and arbitrary character" (p.150). Their thought

seemed to be closer to dreams and day-dreams than to adult reasoning.

Like "the prelogical mentality of the primitive races" (1923/1971a, p.183), children's thought lacked both mechanical causality and logical justification; the mind dealt solely with objects and its relations without being conscious of itself and its own functions. Reality for the child "is both more arbitrary and better regulated than for us...just as the world of the primitive races is peopled with a wealth of arbitrary intentions, but is devoid of chance" (p.212). Only the gradual disappearance of egocentrism permitted the child to ask the appropriate questions in order to construct logical categories. The young child needed this social support, since the internal coherence and direction of logic "is not spontaneously given to the primitive mind, but is a gradual conquest of reason" (p.238). How will the child change in order to leave the realm of primitive thought? "Just as Copernicus ceased to believe in egocentrism and Einstein in Newtonian absolutes" (p.272), by changing his point of view, by seeing himself in relation to a system of objective relationships.

Piaget believed that "given sufficient liberty of action, the child would spontaneously emerge from his egocentrism and tend with his whole being towards cooperation" (1932/1965, p.190). In The Moral Judgment of the Child (1932/1965), Piaget acknowledged the pedagogical

implications of his views on egocentrism. Since only a socialization of children's thought could lead to rational and objective reasoning, and since this was the distinctive trait of the civilized adult, parents and teachers should provide the child with incentives for socialization.

In a passionate diatribe against the current child-rearing and educational methods, Piaget utilized arguments from Freudian psychoanalysis to indict the "average parent," whom he accused of taking pleasure in inflicting punishments and using authority, "the sort of sadism which one sees so often in perfectly respectable folk, whose motto is that 'the child's will must be broken,' or that he must be 'made to feel a stronger will than his.'" (1932/1965, p.192). While parents seem to attribute all problems to "the inborn wickedness of the child or to original sin," Piaget saw a child that was, although often rightly rebellious, "inwardly defeated in the majority of cases" (p.192). Incapable of a rational assessment of what was good and what was reproachable in his parents, the young child was at the mercy of his emotional attachment and ended up "admitting [the parents'] right to the authority they wield over him" (p.192).

Piaget's utopia was a state of cooperation, "dignity of the individual and respect for general opinion as elaborated in free discussion" (1932/1965, p.369); the young child, however, was considered to be in a state of suggestibility, in which through imitation or constraint, he tended

to conform, a combination of factors that Piaget considered also typical of non-democratic societies. "The whole problem is therefore how to take the child out of his egocentricity and lead him to cooperation" (p.368). The method could not be authoritarian since it would only contribute to the persistence of the child's egocentrism, nor could it count on biological maturation alone since morality and logic are the results of cooperation. Instead, Piaget recommended the activity and self-government schools advocated by Dewey, among others, in which "the child is not made to work by means of external constraint, but where he works on his own free will" (1932/1965, p.366). Years later, Piaget criticized again traditional education for trying to lead the child to resemble the typical adult of his society. He believed, on the other hand that "education means making creators...you have to make inventors, innovators, not conformists" (Bringuier, 1980, p.132).

But Piaget observed not only preoperational children. With the birth of his children, he discovered the infant and became part of a respectable tradition of scientist fathers, beginning with Darwin, who developed or revised their theories prompted by the observation of their own offspring (Kessen, 1965). In Piaget's case, his studies of infant cognition revealed a new view of the child. What emerged was "the intelligent baby" (Boden, 1980) rather

than the child as the isolated day-dreamer, trapped in himself, incapable of understanding or being understood described in 1923.

While preschoolers were often characterized by what they lacked, infants were described by what they did. Activity as the origin of intelligence was the new element in the conceptualization of the child. "When I myself had children," explained Piaget (1964/1967), "I was better able to understand the role of action in the development of intelligence. In particular, I learned that actions were the starting point for the future operations of intelligence" (p.78).

The first eighteen months of the child's life were compared to a Copernican revolution: "at the starting point,...the neonate grasps everything to himself...whereas at the termination of this period, i.e. when language and thought begin, he is for all practical purposes but one element or entity among others in a universe that he has gradually constructed himself" (1964/1967, p.9). When Piaget spoke of the infant there was rarely a mention of incapacity or deficit. In an interview, Piaget stated that

"the most creative period of human life is between birth and eighteen months...[from the first reflex] to the construction of space, causality, time, the permanent object, and so on...For speed and creativity, I've always found it to be the period of greatest creation. Cognitive creation...And don't forget--even before language--in action! (Bringuier, 1980, p.129-130).

This way of looking at infants signaled the advent of the idea of the child as a philosopher. Piaget was fascinated by the construction of the Kantian categories. Based on the idea that there is no perception without conception, the question arose about how the conceptual structures come to be. For Kant, they are present at the beginning as given forms of human understanding. For Piaget, these structures were genetic. At the beginning, the child did not possess them yet, which determined the peculiar nature of early thought. Gradually, the child perceived the necessity of the Kantian a priori, "but at the end, not at the beginning. Necessity at the end and not at the beginning" (Bringuier, 1980, p.33).

Asked once why he liked children, Piaget exclaimed: "They're alive, it's wonderful. They're new...they're remarkable!" (Bringuier, 1980, p.46). But he did not consider himself a child psychologist; he did his research with children because this was the only available method to study the formation of the human mind. Piaget said that he would have preferred "to reconstruct the stages from monkey to man, the stages of prehistoric man, the stages of fossilized man; but we know only a few techniques for doing that" (Bringuier, 1980, p.19). Although it is possible to reconstruct history to a certain extent, Piaget wanted to study phylogenesis from its very origin. He had to turn,

like others before him, to ontogenesis: "What is so wonderful about the child is that you always have an individual starting from scratch, and you can see how it all occurs" (p.20).

Although Piaget often recommended caution in following too strictly the recapitulationist parallels--he was familiar with G. S. Hall and the exaggerations of some of his followers--the onto-phylogenetic relationship was his life-long interest. For Piaget, the sequences ran parallel but neither causes the other. Gould (1977) has pointed out that this interpretation of recapitulation had its origin in the 19th-century Naturphilosophie of German Romanticism. The coincidences between the series are attributed not to any specific interaction but to a common constraint, the single direction of all development acting separately on two independent sequences.

The child repeats in her development the history of Western philosophy and science; Western thought sprung, according to Piaget, from sensori-motor origins. He stated that

"in history you have to begin with material techniques before coming to reflection and representation and scientific explanation...take the first explanations of the pre-Socratics, the first Greek physicists...it is very like what we find the child doing when he begins to understand that matter is conserved..." (Bringuier, 1980, p.48).

other Piagetian scholars have elaborated on the metaphor of the child-scientist. For Gruber (1973), children's thought, "like Darwin's, is 'child-like'--questioning, searching, following unexpected leads, inventing, discovering" (p.103). The physicist Rafael Carreras goes one step further when he says:

"I like to present modern physics and show how close it is, fundamentally, to what children do. What is done by the child of four, five, or six can often be described in the same words that describe what is done by absolutely contemporary physicists. The words are the same. They try to bring order out of chaos, and they use the same operations, the same classifications, to such a degree that it can seem--I won't say humiliating--but shocking" (Bringuier, 1980, p.76)

Recent critics of Piagetian thought have pointed out the philosophical implications, mostly problematic in nature, that derive from Piaget's conceptualization of the child as a scientist. Garfield (1983), for example, observed that on occasions "Piaget seems to see the child chipping away at the world in good empiricist fashion, constrained by a recognizable reality beyond itself," but, at other times, the child's construction of knowledge provides only "bundles of coherent possibilities" (p.192) without a criterion for objectivity and truth. Consequently, Garfield proposed an image that he considered a more accurate representation of the Piagetian child: the child "as a traveller through a series of possible worlds, possible ways of seeing the world" (p.193).

The early Piagetian works on children were read and conservatively quoted in America, almost as soon as they appeared. Harriet Johnson (1928), who established a nursery school for very young children in New York, based her ideas on language on Piaget's early work. Psychologists, beginning in the late 1920s, took note of the early work on language, judgment and causality, and ignored all subsequent research until the early 1960s (Flavell, 1962). After that, Piaget became a fad and a cult figure for educators everywhere but especially in the United States (Boyle, 1983). The spectacular, and late, resurgence of interest was, according to Kessen, "another historical mystery" (quoted in Senn, 1975, p.54).

The widely read popularization of early learning by Maya Pines (1966) named Piaget as the reluctant hero among the new mind-builders. Pines observed correctly both the phenomenal worship of Piaget and his unwillingness to let his theories be transformed into educational practice.

Much of what is assumed to be specifically Piagetian, such as spontaneous development or activity learning can be traced back to Froebel and Montessori. And many of the so-called Piagetian tasks on conservation, classification, seriation that were used as educational or test materials were originally designed and intended by Piaget solely for research on cognitive development. The reasons for the lack

of applicability derives from the nature of the Piagetian conceptualization of the child. A solitary child and a distrust of language are not fertile points of departure for an educational theory. Furthermore, it bears repeating, Piaget's passions were epistemology and logic, not psychology or education. The Piagetian focus is on operations not on reality or context; the world only "provided a generalized nourishment for the processes of knowing" (Bruner, 1983,137).

The debate around Piaget's contribution to education is still raging (Modgil, et al., 1984). A study of the reception of his ideas in American education is a necessary endeavor deserving attention in a separate study, especially at a time when his influence in psychology is apparently waning. Although it would probably reveal misunderstandings and, maybe, vulgarizations of his theory, the question would still remain whether even an erroneous interpretation did not constitute a positive contribution to teaching practice.

It is possible to agree, at least in a tentative way, with Bruner's (1983) conclusion that Piaget's major influence was in the area of elementary school curriculum planning. The 1959 Woods Hole conference incorporated into the educator's consciousness the Piagetian notion that the child's understanding of scientific and mathematical ideas was framed by the level of intellectual operation she had

achieved: "the lower level is not a degraded version of the higher. Each has a logic of its own" (Bruner, 1983, p.183)

When Pines (1966) was trying to interview Piaget about the educational implications of cognitive theory, he refused to elaborate on it and sent her to Bruner instead. The recommendation was wise; Bruner offered a way of looking at children in which education became important and he did not mind sharing his insights.

Bruner's cognitive research was firmly based on Piagetian findings but he conceptualized a child in context rather than the Piagetian child he so well described in the following manner:

"The world is a quiet place for Piaget's child. He is virtually alone in it, a world of objects that he must array in space, time and causal relationships. He begins his journey egocentrically and must impose properties on the world that will eventually be shared with others. But others give him little help. The social reciprocity of infant and mother plays a very small role in Piaget's account of development. And language gives neither hints nor even a means of unraveling the puzzles of the world to which language applies. Piaget's child has one overwhelming problem: to bring the inner representations of mind into equilibrium with the structures of experience. Piaget's children are little intellectuals, detached from the hurly-burly of the human condition...So the child who is father to the man in the Piagetian world is indeed a calm child and a lone one" (1983, p.138-139).

American cognitive theorists found that image hard to accept although they were fascinated by the new perspectives Piaget offered to developmental psychology (Senn, 1975). The

discovery of the work of L. S. Vygotsky in the early 1960s contributed the missing element and influenced, to this day, cognitive research in America.

The quiet but pervasive enthusiasm for Vygotsky and A. R. Luria is also, if not a historical mystery, an unexpected turn of events. In 1928 and 1929, the Journal of Genetic Psychology, formerly G. S. Hall's Pedagogical Seminary, published one article of each A. R. Luria and Vygotsky on The Problem of the Cultural Behavior of the Child. The dates coincide with Piaget's early reception and the influence was equally limited, if not almost non-existent. A few years later, in 1934, Vygotsky died prematurely, and his work was banned in the Soviet Union by the vicissitudes of Soviet cultural politics. Rehabilitated in the late 1950s through the efforts of Luria, his work turned out to form the theoretical basis of Soviet cognitive and developmental psychology (Levitin, 1982; Kozulin, 1984). His book Thought and Language was translated into English, in an abbreviated form, in 1962.

As opposed to the scientific foundations of Piaget's thought, Vygotsky began his academic career as a literary critic with a dissertation on Hamlet. Later he taught at a teachers college where he came in contact with children who suffered from congenital defects; in the search for ways of helping these children to fulfill their individual potentials, he discovered developmental psychology (Luria, 1979).

He was also an intellectual Marxian. For Bruner (1983), his brilliant work was a revelation: the thinking child had found a cultural context for her cognitive growth.

Vygotsky, and the group of psychologists that surrounded him, considered that the cultural development of the child proceeded along two main lines: the organic maturational on one hand, and the cultural improvement of the psychological functions, on the other (Vygotsky, 1929). In opposition to Soviet reflexology in which the boundaries between animal and human behavior were programmatically obliterated, he proposed a biosocial psychology which would concentrate on "what is fundamentally new, what instills consciousness and mind in human behavior" (quoted in Kozulin, 1984, p.103). In a fashion very much like James Mark Baldwin, the Soviet psychologists considered that the reciprocal action of the biological givens and socio-cultural forces determined the growth of the individual's "higher" functions. This was a dynamic understanding of development which can be described only if the intervening elements can be accounted in a genetic-historical way: "behavior can only be understood as a history of behavior" (Vygotsky, 1929, p.431).

Vygotsky rebelled at the "quietism" of Piagetian stage theory which assumed that a child had simply to live through each of them until ready to progress to the next one (Bruner, 1983). He also disagreed with the linear views of

human development. Vygotsky (1978) stated his notion of the leaps in the child's cognitive growth very forcefully when he wrote:

"We believe that child development is a complex dialectical process characterized by periodicity, unevenness in the development of different functions, metamorphosis or qualitative transformations of one form into another, intertwining of external and internal factors, and adaptive processes which overcome impediments that the child encounters. Steeped in the notions of evolutionary change, most workers in child psychology ignore those turning points, those spasmodic and revolutionary changes that are so frequent in child development. (p.73)

The strong recapitulationist strand in the Piagetian characterization of the child was reformulated in Vygotsky. Whereas in Piaget, the child's cognitive development had to retrace the history of Western scientific thought, the Russian psychologists concentrated on the cultural tools, language, writing, arithmetic, as mediators between the child and a culture collectively constructed over thousands of years.

Words play a central part, not only in the child's development, but also in the historical growth of consciousness as a whole; "a word is a microcosm of human consciousness" (Vygotsky, 1962, p.153). Through the interaction with older peers, but especially with adults, children have access to the higher cognitive levels attained by their society. The child's intellectual development is supported by "the transmission of knowledge and the formation of

concepts, which is the basic way the adult influences the child" (Luria & Yudovich, 1959, p.11).

Thus, the development of the child was interpreted as a series of transformations determined by the growing influence of the cultural environment; the internalization of each new cultural method involved the change of the structure of the child's conduct (Luria, 1928). As the child grew, the direct use of a psychic function was replaced by a cultural form in civilized society; the child had placed a method or a cultural tool between the function and the task. The educational implications were evident:

"by teaching the child such cultural methods, by encouraging his peculiar inventive capacities, we can in a short time achieve an extraordinary development of the given function, and thus development can be explained only by the fact that the child has mastered his natural psychic abilities, that he has mobilized those functions which he hitherto did not know how to use" (Luria, 1928, p.495)

The child developed in an environment of culture, rather than surrounded by the physical realities confronted by the Piagetian child. Culture, for Vygotsky and Luria, was associated, according to Cole (1979), with the progressive accumulation of the best characteristics of humankind in science, art, and technology, all those accomplishments which free a person from the dominance of instinct, reflex, and custom. According to Luria (1979), Vygotsky was strongly opposed to an overemphasis of man's biological

nature such as Freud's "depth psychology;" he postulated a psychology from the "heights" of man's socially organized experiences.

Vygotsky's lofty interpretation of the child did not, however, imply that he and his collaborators, assumed the existence of a soul or any other inner spiritual force. On the contrary, with the clear intent of being scientific rather than speculative, they rejected all idealism and vigorously affirmed that all development is based on the human reflexes (Luria & Yudovich, 1959). Culture does not produce anything new apart from that which is given by nature, "but it transforms nature to suit the ends of man" (Vygotsky, 1929, p.418). Maturation was a condition rather than a motive; according to Vygotsky (1929, 1962), an organism internally prepared absolutely required the determining influences of the environment in order to enable it to accomplish its development.

Thus, the child, for the Soviet cognitive psychologists, grows up in a social context that transforms "elapsed time into historical time" to borrow from Bronfenbrenner (1983). Time was not only duration but it was imbued with a special texture and reality, different for each individual in every new generation. Children are connected to history and their development is determined by historical changes, planned and unplanned. This assertion was scientifically investigated during the great upheavals

of the Russian revolution in field studies with the peasant population of Central Asia (Luria, 1979).

Vygotsky singled out language as the principal force in the formation of the uniquely human behavior of the child. Language was defined as both a cultural tool and a historical product. In Luria's words (1979), "language carries within it the generalized concepts that are the storehouse of human knowledge" (p.44). From the time of birth onwards, language mediated experience for the child; thought developed concurrently but separately. When the child discovered that words have meaning, both developmental strands intertwined and she entered actively into human society. Through verbal exchanges with adults, children were able to take great cognitive leaps which would have been impossible in isolation: "by naming objects and so defining their connections and relations, the adult creates new forms of reflection of reality in the child, incomparably deeper and more complex than those which he could have formed through individual experience" (Luria & Yudovich, 1959, p.11).

The child became human in cooperation with the adults who interacted with him; "they bring out the special human qualities of the mind and lead the child to new developmental levels" (Vygotsky, 1962, p.104). In Vygotsky's world, "growing up is full of achieving consciousness and voluntary control, of learning to speak and then finding out

what it means, of clumsily taking over the forms and tools of the culture and then learning how to use them appropriately" (Bruner, 1983, p.139).

The picture that Vygotsky presented was that of a child participating in a society deeply committed to the human values of culture and its progress, enriched with the contributions of each succeeding generation. Wise adults, like mentors, guided children over cognitive hurdles by providing the adequate functional help from which the child soared to new, and otherwise impossible, achievements. Once acquired, language was used to structure and guide his imagination, play behavior, and problem solving. The child gradually internalized language until it became "inner speech," the region of the mind where cognition and creativity merge to produce the new and great achievements of civilized humanity.

In the midst of human existence, surrounded by elders who assume the responsibility for their future, Vygotsky's children are attentive listeners, avid learners, multidimensional human beings who will not yield their uniqueness to quantitative evaluations and tests. They have mastered their biological nature and their primary psychological processes. They are reflective and intellectual, but the nature of their thought is determined by the context of reality together with their own emotions and motivations. Their world is not only one of writing and mathematics, it

includes also play, games, and fairy tales. Their rich fantasy, developed and sustained by adult encouragement, will constitute the basis of the older child's ability to imagine and acquire knowledge independent of perception.

This particular model of development attracted the attention of American early childhood educators during the early 1960s. Vygotsky merited a short mention by Weber (1969) who treated his contribution as a minor variation of Piaget. Maya Pines (1966), on the other hand, grasped the important role that Soviet psychology assigned to instruction, in complete opposition to Piaget. John-Steiner and Soubberman (1978) affirmed that "his legacy in an increasingly destructive and alienating world is to offer through his theoretical formulations a powerful tool for restructuring human life with an aim toward survival" (p.133). Since then, Vygotsky's ideas have become operative in child development research and are now, finally, reaching the practitioner (Berk, 1985). It seems that, in these post-Piagetian times, those who care for young children are beginning to accept Jerome Bruner's conclusion that "man could not have made [the developmental] voyage without the aid of the ready-made tools of a culture and its language, that mental growth comes as much from the outside in as from the inside out" (1983, p.278).

CHAPTER X
THE ECLECTIC VIEW OF THE CHILD AND ITS REFLECTION
IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The late 1980s are post-Freudian and post-Piagetian times. No new vision of childhood has emerged in the United States that may rival the texture and the range that Freud and Piaget, those "workers of a grand design" (Kessen, 1965, p.245), were able to contribute to the understanding of the child. The present image of the child is, for the main part, the result of different aggregates based on the findings and conclusions of objective, scientific studies of isolated phenomena in the child's life. Furthermore, teachers of young children, and parents too, often patch their knowledge of the child out of the popularization of ideas that originated in academic research, the "is" of a limited sample promptly translated into an "ought" for the general population. In addition, the semi-professional expertise that is disseminated by the media for commercial purposes (Kessel & Siegel, 1983), accompanied by rapidly changing socioeconomic trends, only augments the present bewilderment about the nature of the child.

This chapter will examine the theoretical contradictions and the social changes that are operative in the practical delivery of present day childcare services. It will also attempt to analyze the reciprocal interaction

between those factors and the conceptualization of the child. In closing, this chapter will present several suggestions that may help teachers to rediscover the complexity and uniqueness of the child. This section will necessarily reflect the underlying convictions of this writer; a complex, informed, and coherent vision of children and childhood is considered a fundamental prerequisite for the intelligent and humane educator.

It is important that teachers of young children be cognizant of other concepts of the child that have been formulated, such as the religious ideas of Catholic or Hutterite educators, the philosophic-hermetic approach of Rudolf Steiner or the psychologico-mythical views of the Jungians, to mention only a few, in addition to examples examined in this study. In addition, a cross-cultural understanding of children will be necessary in order to formulate a thoughtful and profound image of the child. This image should be the source of the practitioner's actions while theories, as Biber (1984) has pointed out, should be used as resources.

The examination of the contemporary image of the young child will reveal both an eclecticism and a fragmentation dictated, in part, by forces outside of the fields of psychology and education. This examination will begin with a look at the peculiar nature of the Piagetian influence on

the practices of early childhood education in the United States, a particularly good example of the entanglement of psychological and educational themes with socioeconomic motives.

The American enthusiasm for cognitive enhancement was based at first on the desire to improve the academic skills of children perceived as disadvantaged. The impact of a supposedly superior Soviet technology deriving apparently from a better education made improved intellectual achievement also a national priority for all children.

These socioeconomic and political factors, added to a certain anti-intellectualism which equated academic learning to "empty verbalism," prompted the adoption of Piagetian ideas in a way which, in many instances, proved to be more dogmatic than realistic. Piaget-inspired curricula designed by Lavatelli and Kamii, for example, did not find widespread application (Almy, 1979; Biber, 1984). Referring to the Piagetian enthusiasm and the almost exclusive emphasis on the cognitive aspects of the young child, Foreman and Fosnot (1982) observed that "somewhere along the way we lost sight of the child in the glint of our shiny new curriculum packages" (p.189).

However, many of the most widely available early childhood education publications read by teachers and childcare workers (Schwebel & Raph, 1973; Kamii, 1982; Foreman & Kushner, 1983, for example) ignore, for the most

part, the controversial nature and dynamic state of Piagetian theory (Siegel, 1979) and present these ideas as the monolithic embodiment of the truth. Kamii (1985), for example, in a tone reminiscent of the battles around Froebel, attacked all education prior to Piaget adducing that "for, centuries, education has been based on mere common sense, trial and error, and opinions called philosophies, such as Rousseau's and Dewey's philosophies" (p.4) and proposed Piaget as the source "of precise knowledge of cognitive and moral development" (p.8). Furthermore, the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the most influential professional association in the field, has also adopted the Piagetian orthodoxy as its official philosophy, although it occasionally publishes opposing viewpoints. Haiman (1984), for example, concerned about an excessive emphasis on cognition, pointed out in the NAEYC publication Young Children, "that there is more to early childhood than cognitive development" and asked educational leaders to focus more "on presenting the emotional and social characteristics of young children and how these dynamics interact with cognition and learning" (p.8).

Moved by the concern about the perceived neglect of the social and emotional aspects of the child, and in an intent to clarify the widespread misunderstanding of the nature of the young child's cognition, the Association for Childhood Education International published a pamphlet

urging their members to "help combat the trend toward early academic learning" (Simmons & Brewer, 1985). Already Almy (1979) had noted earlier that there existed significant differences between Piaget's theory and the way Piaget was understood in the field. In its practical application, most of the theoretical richness was lost and only the concept of Piagetian stages and the importance of activity for the child have been retained. The literalistic application of Piagetian theory not only frequently misuses research procedures as teaching method but also places an overemphasis on cognition (Biber, 1984), leaving the teacher at a loss in the areas of affectivity and social interaction. While early childhood educators continue their allegiance to the early Piaget, developmental psychologists have elaborated on the insights Piaget has provided throughout his long and productive career and have expanded the understanding of the child by incorporating the social dimension, following the lead of Soviet psychology (Cole, 1983).

Just as a strict Piagetian orthodoxy distorts and impoverishes the image of the child, the general tendency of the childcare and education community of relying on scientific or pseudoscientific findings as a rationale for everyday procedures further fragments that image. At the same time, the faith placed by educators in scientific psychology as a source of unambiguous facts about the child is being disappointed. Evans (1975) reflected with perplexity on the

difficulties of determining the aims of education of young children considering the unavoidable interplay of psychological findings and philosophical formulations. Although Evans believed that empirical data should have the final authority in decision making, he noted with a measure of desperation that "one wonders if a definitive statement about anything will ever be made" (p.390).

Research itself has contributed to the objectification of the child. Vygotsky had already pointed out in the 1930s in a study translated and incorporated in Mind in Society (1978), the close relationship between theoretical constructs and the methods employed to demonstrate them. He reminded the reader that the experimental, quantitative method was first formulated in the 1880s by introspective psychologists to study areas such as psychophysics and psychophysiology which dealt with simple psychological phenomena: "this limitation is a built-in feature of the experimental method" (p.60). Higher psychological functions were not considered appropriate subjects of inquiry for this method. Polakow-Suransky (1982) has called it "the quantitative lens through which children's lives are filtered, measured, and thereafter stamped with the legitimizing seal of statistical credibility" (p.30). The result is today's scientific model of the child which tends to be uncritically accepted as the correct version of a knowable and measurable

child. Polakow-Suransky aptly observed that in the scientific model

"we have created an alien image of human self-representation...pieced together from fragmented, atomized components of the child's existential being [resulting] in a reductionistic and degraded image of the child, modeled on natural science and emulating the laws of physics with an unquestioned credibility" (p.31).

Not surprisingly, Polakow-Suransky's view of the child is almost Vygotskian although she does not mention the Soviet psychologist: "The child is not a deculturated, isolated monad, existing in ahistorical relationships to his era, but, rather lives in culture, in language, and makes history together with other human beings" (1982, p.32).

The American predilection for the experimental method in the study of children dates from Thorndike's animal studies and his indefatigable work on scales to measure virtually every imaginable aspect of the child. If the child is conceptualized as a complex being, then the experimental method has to be seen as imposing on the image of the child "a clarity and order...that it may not have in God's eye" (Kessen, 1975). Different methods are needed in order to understand, rather than simplify, the complexity of the child. Piaget and Vygotsky were among those who designed new methods in response to their theoretical assumptions, and who, significantly enough, did not shy away from philosophical considerations. Kessen (1975) pointed out the need to be wary "of any approach to the study of

children and recommendations for their care that is not systematically and modestly aware that facts about children come surrounded by veils, more or less transparent, of political and ideological bias" (p.102).

Furthermore, early childhood education planners and practitioners are sometimes unaware of the mutual incompatibility of positivistic, mechanistic models of development and organismic approaches. Reese and Overton (1970) examined the metaphorical nature of theoretical models and pointed out that their importance does not lie in their validity or accuracy: "it is not being asserted that the world is thus and so, only that the real world behaves as if it were thus and so" (p.120). And they added that "from this point of view, pleas for a synthesis of such approaches as Piaget's on the one hand and American behaviorism on the other are futile...this kind of synthesis or eclecticism must lead to confusion because it involves mixing different world hypotheses" (p.121).

Educators need to examine their beliefs from this perspective. This does not imply that education can only be based on an unitary model of development. In the process of formulating a conceptualization of the child, educators will find it necessary to search for an organic rather than an aggregate vision. In other words, the study of different theories and the understanding of their philosophical implications will contribute to an integrative rather than

eclectic conception of the child. Such a theoretical integration has been achieved by the Bank Street developmental-interaction viewpoint (Biber, 1984), but this is by no means the only possibility.

Developmental psychology has acknowledged the relativities of both childhood and child psychology. It has become aware of the mythical models of the child (Kagan, 1984) and, especially, of the fact that such myths are efficacious cultural constructions (Wartofsky, 1983). Early childhood education, on the other hand, proceeds for the most part, as if the child was a given isolated reality, researchable through the methods of a positivistic science.

Without falling into a radical relativism that would paralyze all research, some psychologists have agreed that "the life-worlds as well as the cognitive and affective character of children are profoundly historical in nature" (Edelstein, 1983, p.76). Child psychology has also faced "the question of whether or not a scientific account of human development can be given without bringing in its wake the false claims of scientism and the arrogance of an ethic based on current findings" (Kessen, 1983a). Early childhood education has, for the most part, not considered the historicity of the conception of the child. Neither has the field confronted the ethical implications of its scientific findings. While psychology proclaimed the beginnings of a

post-positivistic era in which its modes of inquiry will be rather more like those of the humanities than that of the sciences (Kessel, 1983b), early childhood education is more and more committed to research and evaluation based on quantitative data (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1982).

The evaluation and measurement of children and educational outcomes have profound effects on the theoretical framework of early childhood programs. The advent of massive federal support of early education during the 1960s and 1970s made cost-effective criteria relevant and evaluation an integral part of every federally supported program. In consequence, it was not long before educators began to be guided by the content of evaluation measures in planning their programs. Although day care programs have been extremely resistant to evaluation efforts (Fuqua, 1984), systematic evaluation is almost unanimously considered necessary for quality services. However, according to Zimiles (1982), the power of evaluation raises the prospect that an educational psychology based on easily measurable constructs will gradually supplant a frame of reference based on an organic conceptualization of the child.

The influence of "expert opinion" on the image of the child and, consequently, on the actual life experience of children has acquired great importance in recent times, particularly since group care is fast becoming the modal

type of early childcare in America (Caldwell & Freyer, 1982). Critics have observed the increasing power professionals wield over the parental function (Keniston, 1977; Lasch, 1977, 1984; Grubb & Lazerson, 1982; Lilejestrom, 1983). The erosion of parental authority, which dates at least since Progressivism (Hogan, 1985), is generally accompanied by a lack of confidence on the part of parents in the ability to understand their children and a gradual relinquishing of the responsibility of their upbringing. In Lilejestrom's (1983) words "personal responsibility is lifted out of the everyday context and moved over to the professional domain" (p.138). For parents, the result is "a sense of having no guidelines or supports for raising children, the feeling of not being in control as parents, and the widespread sense of guilt for what seems to be going awry" (Keniston, 1977, p.4).

This problematic picture is further complicated by the contemporary changes in the practice of early childhood education. Without trying to disentangle the complexities of this area, it is necessary to point out that the fact that full-time childcare is replacing traditional part-time programs is a phenomenon of utmost importance. It implies a totally new understanding of the triadic relationship of child-parent-childcare provider and, in consequence, of the way children are viewed by the adults who care for them. While nursery schools and preschools were specifically

planned to serve children, daycare centers are organized around the needs of parents in spite of claims to the contrary. The resulting ambiguities about who is the client (Joffe, 1977; Cataldo, 1984)) tend to interfere with the organization and implementation of these programs.

Historically, day care had been provided as a service to families experiencing economic hardships; it was unrelated to educational or "developmental" goals. Only recently, through the influence of the women's movement, full-time child care has become a socially acceptable arrangement for many American children regardless of parent income or occupation, limited only by its availability. An emphasis on educational components, often of a strictly academic nature, has accompanied this transformation. In the process, day care is slowly being recognized as a legitimate province of the child development field as "a comprehensive service to children and families that supplements the care children receive from their families" (Caldwell, 1985, p.4). By its very nature, day care seems to demand a holistic understanding of the child; the question is, is it in practice, an eclectic, an aggregate, or has child care evolved an integrated image of the child?

Hailed first as a way of compensating for the deficiencies of families with some type of social pathology and proposed as one of the legitimate rights of women by the feminist movement, full-time care is still a matter of

intense debate. Clarke-Stewart (1982) examined the differing opinions of "experts" and mentioned Selma Fraiberg, Benjamin Spock, among others, who concurred that full-time maternal care is essential for a healthy early development. Therefore day care was often labeled as "dangerous" for children. Burton H. White (1975) was greatly influential in proclaiming the irreplaceable function of mother and family in the early years. Others have seen it as the cause of the dissolution of the family; former President Nixon's veto of the Comprehensive Child Development Bill in 1971 was emblematic of this conservative attitude. Similar concerns were voiced before: it is possible to read in the 1859 volume of the American Journal of Education, for example, that "the bond of affection which connect the members of a family is, at the present time, continually slackening, [therefore] attendance to infant school by children whose mothers remain at home and are not obliged to labor elsewhere for their support should ordinarily not be allowed, certainly not encouraged" (p.387).

On the other hand, there is now a general trend toward a more positive view of day care; some of the child development experts, Kagan and Bowlby among them, have reversed their earlier negative views and have of late expressed a more favorable opinion (Clarke-Stewart, 1982). With full-time care becoming a fact dictated by economic trends rather than by psychological insights, the latest

controversy is focused on the degree of structure desirable for early education programs and the age of children who participate in them. Several states are lowering the entrance age for public school to include four-year-olds while many educators are skeptical about the benefits of premature formal schooling and recommend a more homelike environment and relaxed programming for young children.

The changing opinions about day care are closely tied to a new understanding of the maternal role in the development of children. Observations here, however, will focus on the impact full-time group care of young children has on the conceptualization of the child, with special emphasis on the image implicit in the nature of the service itself.

Recently, several studies have been motivated by a concern about the perceived neglect of the uniqueness of the child in day care environments. Cataldo (1984), for example, observed that day care was dominated by a social-worker mentality in which the family, rather than the child, is regarded as the client. She urged an adjustment of this view to include a primary focus on the child as the essential client to avoid a situation in which "the child is essentially sacrificed, lost in a system that attends to adults' requirements" (p.321).

Rivlin and Wolfe (1985) examined the way conceptions of the nature of childhood have influenced the type of settings demanded for and provided to children. They

pointed out that "over the last 150 years, the major change in children's lives has been that more and more of their time, their days, and years are spent in institutional environments" (p.211). During the last decade even infants and very young children have been incorporated into the institutional environment in great numbers. These authors examined day care centers as institutions, together with psychiatric hospitals and schools, and studied the impact of institutional life on children. Although the authors admitted that "programs could address the individual and community needs of children in a way that retains the spontaneity and curiosity of childhood" (p.231), they concluded that

"contemporary day-care settings embody institutional qualities in their programs and physical form [and] children in day care are having institutional experiences. A major goal of the centers was preparing children for their next institutional entry, that of school" (p.230-231).

The main characteristics of an institutional setting are the structuring of the day and the routinization of time and activities. Both the use of the environment and its accessibility are controlled by the adult; the unavoidable sense of powerlessness that children experience is emphasized and rationalized by the dictum "structure is necessary for them." The possibilities for independence and privacy are limited. Little space or time belong to the children; even their "free" play is regulated by the constraints of

time and space. Consequently, children undergo a "stripping of self" process similar, in a way, to that suffered by inmates in total institutions (Goffman, 1961).

It was this institutional quality of day care that Polakow-Suransky (1982) had identified as a powerful factor in the contemporary erosion of childhood. Inspired by Jonathan Kozol's indictment of the public school as an institution of containment she asked: "What happens when this "containment of youth" becomes the "containment" of infants, toddlers, and the very young?" (p.42). Polakow-Suransky examined the situation of the child in the context of capitalism:

"Ironically it is at the level [of the 'ideologization' of early childhood] that a radical social philosophy of freedom endorses the early institutionalization of children precisely because another movement presents itself as the dialectical antithesis to the containment of children--the women's movement. It is at this paradoxical intersection of history that a woman and her child sadly find themselves at war with one another, vying for freedoms denied in the capitalist structure of domination, in which, historically, both have been commodities" (p.42).

Polakow-Suransky saw childcare as one manifestation of the dismissal of "the being of childhood" in favor of the needs of adults, an attitude that made it possible "to remove children from the center of our lives and relegate them to the confines of the age-segregated institution" (p.189). This view reflected the situation of the child during the "radical" phase of feminism of the early 1970s; an examina-

tion of the view of the child in the 1980s, on the other hand, might reveal a greater influence of economic pressures rather than the purely ideologic reinvidications of women. The issue of institutionalization with its concomitant image of the child as inmate, however, persists.

The new emphasis on personal fulfillment contributed to the desirability of full-time child care. Adults in contemporary America seem to feel less a commitment to the next generation than in the past. Parents today are less self-sacrificing, less child-oriented and more self-centered than their parents were (Clarke-Stewart, 1982). Marriages are entered in for the emotional satisfaction of the partners, and only secondarily for procreation. Therefore, if the affective conjugal bond weakens the marriage is dissolved; in many cases, the presence of children, has ceased to be a consideration in the decisions about divorce (Keniston, 1977).

A recurrent accusation in this context is that America has not learned to love her children in spite of claiming to be a child-oriented society. This argument was part of the political rhetoric of the 1970s (Cable, 1975) and it still persists today. Lindner (1986) speaks of "our national policy of child carelessness" and points out "the lack of thoughtful and comprehensive plan for child care that is known in other nations" (p.4). According to Lindner,

this lack stems from the failure to adjust old conceptions, individualism in this case, to new social realities; "here we must recognize that one of our cherished 'habits of the heart'--our staunch insistence on an individualistic view of childrearing--is in stark contrast to the common good" (p.6). Grubb and Lazerson (1982) stated that "in a period of rising costs and poor future prospects, our negative feelings toward children have become magnified," and they concluded that "ambivalence toward children--both children in general and one's own children--is thus deeply embedded in modern conceptions of childhood" (p.89). This ambivalence and the "the confused purposes of child care" (p.217) which derive from it are important issues for today's teachers of young children. This chaos is the seedbed for new conceptions about the role of childhood in human development. The fluid state of the ideas about children and families also provide the opportunity for the emergence of a new balance between the needs and responsibilities of young and adult members of society as well as for a reassessment of the respective roles of the individual and the state in the nurturing of a new generation.

It is an often repeated statement in the research literature that quality care, an admittedly elusive concept (Elkind, 1979), would provide the child with a child-appropriate experience in group care and compensate for

parental shortcomings. This idea is disputed by Liljestrom (1983) who studied the day care experience in Sweden, where childcare is considered by many as "exemplary" (Polakow-Suransky, 1982, p.200). Liljestrom, however, observed that impersonality and detachment become associated with the professionalization and institutionalization of early childhood, even in quality programs. The willingness of parents to delegate the care of their child to an institution is related to the emergence of "the public child.", "a child conceived in daylight with the best of intentions, by the state and respectable science" (p.144).

Sweden established a policy for the social upbringing of the child and "emphasized that day nurseries existed in the best interests of the child and not to make it possible for mothers to work outside the home" (p.137). The Swedish theory of early childhood education is a combination of the ideas of Erikson, Piaget and G. H. Mead; their implementation fulfills the highest standards. Nevertheless, even optimal child care is seen as problematic by Liljestrom:

"The import of professionalization, surely, has been to humanize the ways in which adults behave toward children. At the same time, however, the search for underlying explanations for children's behaviors, their development crises and disturbances, instills feelings of aloofness and alienation in the professional or scientific observer, with children shrinking to objects" (p.146)

The concern about the disappearance of the child, obliterated by the institutions designed to serve her is not

new. Although the expression was popularized by Postman (1982), the issue has existed for some time. Agnes de Lima (1926) had already expressed the opinion that even the progressives seemed to have other priorities than the child in mind. In 1967, LeShan exposed the myth of American child-centeredness and expressed the opinion that there was a conspiracy against childhood instead.

In times of rapid changes, there seems to be a tendency to compensate for the bewildering circumstances with nostalgic idealizations. The modern idea of childhood was closely related from the beginning to the Romantic idea of nature and became intertwined with the idealization of rural life as a consequence of the rise of industrialization and its far reaching practical consequences for children and families.

The belief in the superiority of rural over urban life had been a part of the kindergarten movement, as well as of the biogenetic view of the child and the ideas of the philanthropists. The move to the suburbs after World War II was also motivated by the perception that a rural or small town atmosphere was the ideal environment for children. Cities were considered unhealthy and detrimental to their moral life; LeShan (1967) emphasized "the horrors and hazards that have accompanied the rapid increase of urban living" (p.295). This belief is still part of the "naive" theory of childhood.

More recently, however, the awareness of the powerful role of television has replaced urbanization as the perceived main cause of the erosion of childhood; Postman (1982) considered television with its exclusive reliance on the image and its blatant commercialism as the harbinger of the end of literacy and childhood. As convincing as Postman's (1982) argument may be, and the contentions of the others who have predicted the demise of the child (Elkind, 1981; Polakow-Suransky, 1982; Winn, 1984), it is necessary to understand that what is really under discussion is the end of the Romantic idea of the child which, in a sentimentalized or simplified version, has been powerfully operative until recently in the popular culture.

The young child, innocent and precious, has been replaced in the popular mind, according to Elkind (1981) for example, by the child as a surrogate self, as a status symbol, as a partner, as a therapist, or even as the conscience of the adult. Other psychologists (Kessel & Siegel, 1983, p.44) considered that the child as a consumer good, as a liability, or as an economic burden were appropriate metaphors for the contemporary Western middle-class perception of the child.

Not surprisingly, this development has caused alarm among those who study or work with children. It is significant that the concern is greatest among those authors who have a strong humanistic background. The perception of

childhood as an endangered concept coincides with the conviction of the social importance of a rich, humane, individually fulfilling childhood in the face of an increasingly pervasive instrumental view of the child. Like the plea for the reconstruction of developmental psychology (Kessel & Siegel, 1983), this concern is a corollary of the belief in the complexity and uniqueness of each child.

The theme of the disappearance of childhood is also closely related to the issue of precocity. Historically, precocity has been valued when the child was conceived as blank, unfinished, an empty organism; it was encouraged by Puritans, by Locke, and by the behaviorists. On the other hand, precocity was considered a pathological sign and greatly discouraged in organic, developmental views; precocity was anathema to Froebel and Piaget.

Thus, the debates about the appropriateness of early academics are not new (Spodek, 1985). The alarming characteristic of today's understanding of precocity is that it includes an expectation of adultlike affectivity and encourages early sexual knowledge in addition to the academic demands made on the child (Elkind, 1981; Postman, 1892; Winn, 1984). Furthermore, pressures for academic precocity are now exerted downwards on infants and toddlers. Very young children, by virtue of their obvious helplessness, have always been perceived as qualitatively different and were treated accordingly. The present trend, however,

seems to be pointing toward the obliteration, to a degree, of their special status.

Professional child care finds itself in the problematic situation of being accused by some of contributing to the demise of childhood (Polakow-Suransky, 1982) while others see in this field, and in public education, the hope for its survival (Postman, 1982; Longfellow-Robinson, 1985), or the agent of a redefinition of the function of family and society (Grubb & Lazerson, 1982). Umansky (1983), in his plea for a revaluing of childhood, placed the responsibility for enhancing the image and development of children in contemporary society on the shoulders of professional educators.

Faced with such conflicting messages, this is the time for those who work with children to reassess their professional identity and their assumptions about the nature of children. It is the conviction of this author that a knowledge of the wide range of views held about the child will be of fundamental importance in the thoughtful elaboration of a coherent understanding of children in their social and historical context. This reassessment must be understood as a continuing process because those forces that influence parents and children, and family structure and education are always moving on. In Spodek's (1985) words,

teachers will understand "past as a prologue" and feel part of a long but ever changing tradition.

The purpose of this study has been to demonstrate the cultural nature of the notion of the child through the examination of the most prominent changes it experienced during the last century. It is the characteristic of professional maturity to know the history of one's field (Lerner, 1983). The implications for practice are important: a cultural construct is only effective as the basis for practical application if it is congruous with the culture in which it is expected to operate. A conception of the child in which maternal care is viewed as the only mode of care for the early years will not be an effective assumption in the establishment of infant programs, for example. In a time when women have redefined their maternal role, childcare professionals will have to reconstruct their view of the child by accepting "the validity of maternal employment and the advantages of shared childrearing so that child care can be free of ambivalence and anachronism" (Grubb & Lazerson, 1982, p.231).

An additional way of reconstructing one's notion of the child might be by following Kessen's (1983a) advice to his fellow developmental psychologists. He stated that "it may be methodologically therapeutic to glance, however briefly, at several common themes of our field, all [of which] may be ready for a thoughtful new evaluation"

(p.265). These themes, common also to early childhood education, are three. The commitment to science and technology is, as has been pointed out above, particularly strong, at least in theory, in the child development field. The second theme is the commitment to home and mother and to the importance of early experience. A corollary of this second theme is the postulate of personal responsibility: "someone is responsible for what happens in the course of development" (p.268). The third, and most fundamental implicit commitment of American culture is, according to Kessen, the belief in the individual and self-contained child: "the child--like the Pilgrim, the cowboy, and the detective on television--is invariably seen as a free-standing isolable being who moves through development as a self-contained and complete individual" (p.268).

All three beliefs are slowly being eroded in developmental psychology and early childhood education is beginning to reflect these changes in its own way. The belief in a positivistic science has been attacked from within the field by those who approached the education of young children from a humanistic position from Naumburg (1928) to Biber (1984). However, Kagan's questioning of the second premise in his work on infancy (Kagan et al., 1978) has not found an echo among educators; the idea of a resilient child must seem incongruous in a field based on the crucial importance of the early years. The third premise, the self-contained

child, is still the dominant belief although teachers are beginning to listen to "the story of the embeddedness of the developing mind in society" (Kessen, 1983a, p.269).

In the reconstruction of the definition of the child, educators, like child psychologists, must become more modest in the recognition of professional limitations and the cultural complexity of the child (Kessen, 1983b). With this new attitude, early childhood educators will not only care and educate children but also constantly learn from them.

CHAPTER XI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Summary

The debate about the nature of the child in America and elsewhere has been always inevitably based on theoretical constructions. From the 17th century to our time, these constructions relied successively on classical thought, religious doctrine, philosophical systems, and on scientific methods of various designs. The questions at the heart of all speculations revolved about the innate goodness, corruption, or an original neutrality of the child, compounded with the disputes about the immutability, determinism, or the flexibility and plasticity of the human individual. Although the American discussion of the topic has been deeply influenced by European thought, the American interpretation has invariably transformed the original material in a significant way. By adding a note of optimism and frequently simplifying the theoretical complexity, Americans adapted European ideas to the social needs of a rapidly expanding and changing society.

The last one hundred years of theory and practice in the group care of young children in America revealed several common ideas about children that appear and disappear like strands that weave through the educational fabric. The fundamental issues debated in the context of childrearing and education of the very young during this

historical period are shown in schematic form in Appendix A. While such a table may clarify the diversity of the topics discussed, it overlooks the theoretical complexity which is at the heart of most notions of the child.

The innate goodness attributed by the Romantics to children had gradually substituted the Christian, and more specifically Calvinist, belief in the inherent depravity, brutality, aggressiveness, and selfishness of all humanity. Among educators, Froebel was the most perfect example of Romantic attitude. In his view, the young child was essentially different from the adult, endowed with a holiness and wisdom equal to that of the son of God, a great inner complexity, and in close touch still, albeit unconsciously, with the forces that animate the universe. Consequently, children represented the state toward which the adult strove to return in a rational and conscious way. The child was neither plastic nor determined but the embodiment of all human potentialities, positive as well as negative. These potentialities developed in a dialectical freedom in the context of ever widening social influences until the ideal adult would reach again a state of wisdom and virtue.

Montessori, in a vastly different tone, was probably the only educator whose work was inspired by a similar profound reverence for the child. She did not subscribe to

the idealistic philosophy that underlied Froebel's thought but she did see in the child an original goodness, a power for self-realization, a connectedness with an all-encompassing power she called Life, and an intellectual curiosity, all attributes which she considered unique to childhood and which could only survive into adulthood if carefully protected and nurtured by society.

Froebel's vision of the child suffered considerable transformations in America. Sentimentalized on the one hand, and transformed by bureaucratic needs in the process of its incorporation to the public school system on the other, it quickly became fossilized and anachronistic. In a few decades time, Froebel's name became just a historic reference in America, while his legacy remained a living tradition in Europe. Montessori's ideas did fare somewhat better. After experiencing a false start in America at the beginning of the 20th century, her method became reestablished in the late 1950s and flourished to this day. However, the Montessorian vision of the child as the fountainhead of humanity and of education as the liberation of the spirit and the creation of a new man has been turned into modern goals of academic achievement.

The social reformers of the late 19th and early 20th century seemed to have been the American heirs of the Froebelian veneration of the child. Although Jane Addams and Felix Adler, among others, secularized the Froebelian

ideas by translating the religious connotations into social terms, they built their social theory on the belief in the children's innate goodness. They attributed to them a sacredness based on their spiritual nature and their vulnerability and helplessness. More importantly, children were seen as the embodiment of the future; they were society's opportunity to transcend itself and reach higher levels of moral integrity. The child, every child, regardless of social class or ethnic origin, was conceptualized as the redeemer for society in general.

The philanthropic movement of the late 19th century, on the other hand, was not inspired by a reverence for the child, but by a defensive, self-protective motivation that prompted the affluent classes to feed, shelter, or educate the children of the poor in order to guarantee the status quo. The operative view of the child was instrumental; children were seen as potential future threats to the established order. Therefore services provided to the poor were rationalized as insurance costs to preserve existing privileges. The nature and value of the child depended on that child's social and ethnic origin; the philanthropic effort did not envision the empowerment of every human being in a society based on equality but an amelioration of the conditions of the poor to a level just sufficient to maintain the social peace.

An instrumental view of the child characterized also the ideology of the War on Poverty of the 1960s. More than ever before, services planned for children were justified by the savings to society that would be provided by particular programs in light of the pessimistic description of specific racial, ethnic, or social populations. Like all philanthropic work on behalf of children, such a view was based on an atomized society in which each individual was defined as self-contained and responsible for her own destiny. In spite of the intentions of those involved in the design of the War on Poverty to maximize the opportunities of low-income children, its ideology implicitly negated human equality .

The interpretation of children as the locus of remediation of society's concrete and practical problems seems convincing to many today because it is still the prevalent argument in the advocacy for more and better services for young children. Even the Children's Defense Fund, a remarkable advocacy organization inspired by the moral and religious principles of its president Marian Wright Edelman, uses the cost-effectiveness terminology in addition to passionate pleas for moral and social responsibility, presumably because this is the only language America's elected officials will understand. However, the danger of such an argument was clearly demonstrated by the effect of the 1969 Westinghouse report on Head Start

effectiveness where a lack of encouraging results caused a reduction in allocations of funds for the program. If the financial support for programs deemed essential for children is made dependent on cost-effectiveness criteria, then those programs are left at the mercy of evaluation projects instead of resting on social and moral imperatives. Children are not economic resources or good or bad investments and should never be quantified as such. Social policy should determine advocacy, with budget considerations as an important but not determinant factor, just as policy determines exclusively other areas of government decision making. Wright Edelman illustrated this point brilliantly when she observed that while cost-effectiveness is almost the only criteria for human services, it is not applied to such massive federal expenditures as national defense or the space program (Wright Edelman, 1986).

Although Head Start sponsored the development of several models which, in turn, were based on various educational theories, all programs had the common goal of improving the chances of low-income children in the field of academic achievement as a means of meliorating the problems of poverty and social unrest. The extensive research and evaluation of the various models was limited to establishing which methods would deliver the greatest academic or cognitive gains. The greater issue of human equality and

the interrelatedness of social and individual forces beyond the immediate reality of a particular child were not addressed by the planners of the War on Poverty just as they had been ignored by philanthropists of earlier generations and are still ignored, by definition, by philanthropic efforts today.

During the late 19th century, the philosophical mode of conceptualizing the nature of the child was being gradually replaced by what was deemed to be the objective and scientific study of children. Although the trend was of European origin, with Darwin and Preyer among the first who proposed the dispassionate observation of facts related to the growth of a child in order to come to know the nature of the child in unequivocal terms, the application of positivistic methods of natural science to the study of human nature flourished lavishly in America.

G. S. Hall was the first to establish the science of experimental and observational child study, but his theoretical preconceptions about the recapitulatory nature of human development overpowered the data contained in the copious observations submitted by parents and teachers from across the country. His idea of the child as repeating the biological past from amoeba to primate was so powerful that he constantly saw it confirmed by the information he received or the observations he conducted himself. The

child was neither good nor bad, he was just reexperiencing the evolutionary process dictated by nature. Education had to respect these natural forces and only when they had worked themselves out during childhood could the adult intervene to help the best of each new generation achieve a higher evolutionary stage.

Such a view was diametrically opposed to the angelic nature of the Froebelian child and, combined with the early confrontation with Freud's ideas, not coincidentally introduced and mediated in great measure by Hall, contributed to explode the dominant sentimentalization of childhood and to prepare general opinion for the acceptance of a more rigidly scientific understanding of children. While the recapitulationist and naturalistic view of the child fulfilled this ancillary function, it also survived in Gesell's work, although deprived of much of Hall's pathos and transformed into a medical model. The child became a biological entity which, given time and benign conditions, would become the adult programmed by countless preceding generations.

Throughout the 20th century, the scientific notion of the child was expressed in several versions. On the one hand, it was contained in the evolutionary image of Hall and in the normative postulates of Gesell. On the other hand, the scientific child was also behind the statistical abstractions of Thorndike or the mechanistic vision of

Watson or, more recently, implied in the controllable and programable entity described by Skinner. For the associationist Thorndike as for Watson and Skinner, the child, wherever he or she was born, was a given entity to be studied, measured, manipulated by the methods of an exact science. Introspection as a methodological alternative was dismissed as unscientific; an inner or spiritual dimension, then, had to be omitted by definition. Therefore, in spite of the differences in detail, it is possible to define a scientific image of the child as one in which the inward forces, feelings, motivations, in short, the distinctly human characteristics of the child, are deliberately and methodologically ignored because they are considered irrelevant. Furthermore, a scientific, quantitative, experimental method necessarily minimizes the differences between humans and other animals. This method proposes a fundamental continuum where the only differences between children and primates are of a quantitative nature.

The scientific conception of the child did away with the humanistic notion of education and placed great emphasis on specific learning and training, vital to an expanding industrial society in need of people with new and efficient skills. The quantitative measurement of aptitude, intelligence, and performance permitted also a social stratification legitimized by science and in open contradiction to the

egalitarian principles professed by American democracy. The interest in the child as an individual was substituted by a passion for managing the child as an aggregate with a view toward productivity and adjustment, values adopted from the world of industry and commerce.

The associationism of Thorndike evolved into Watson's behaviorism. The rigid hereditarianism of the mental measurement movement was replaced by the radical environmentalism of Watson and, decades later, of Skinner. Child nature was seen as almost identical to human nature, with the exception that the child possessed a greater degree of plasticity and, therefore, a greater susceptibility to conditioning. The issues of innate nature of the child became meaningless since in the stimulus-response view, individuals were passively at the mercy of the circumstances that determined their behavior.

The denial of mind and consciousness and the mechanistic and materialistic definition of the child has been interpreted by some to be the reflection of the American passion for technology and production. Watson's behaviorism and Skinner's neo-behaviorism are considered to be the only original American contributions to the understanding of the child. In this view, the humanistic emphasis on inner control, freedom, and responsibility as developmental values was replaced by biological and environmental determinism.

On close analysis, behaviorism offered effective techniques of management rather than a comprehensive view of the child. It has been extensively applied to education, childrearing practices, and the treatment of behavior disorders in addition to its uses in advertising, marketing, and industrial management. Behaviorism has created a technology of education, first with teaching machines and mainframe computers, all kinds of classroom materials, and more recently, behavioristic principles have surfaced also in the design of many personal computer software programs.

Not all psychologists of the turn of the century did adopt the scientific notion of the child. William James, a man who taught the experimental method to Hall and many others, was too much of a philosopher to be able to accept a simplified version of human nature. He confronted the idea of the immortal soul and translated it into the concept of stream-of-consciousness in an effort to take away some of the mystique of introspection. He transposed the standards of idealistic ethics into the pragmatic principles of social well-being and democratic principles.

Dewey considered James' pragmatism a fruitful theory and applied it to early and elementary education. He created a democratic child who was a product of social experience, rather than the predetermined result of hereditary forces or the unfolding of a mystical Absolute. Dewey

chose to retain the concept of mind but defined it as an integral part of the adaptive mechanisms of the individual.

While G. H. Mead, the Chicago sociologist, and J. M. Baldwin explored the social embeddedness of human development, Dewey saw society as a normative force for the child. He interpreted correctly the particular needs of a time that envisioned material progress as its goal and drew an optimistic picture of a child whose destiny in life would be the understanding of the industrial organization and the responsible functioning within this structure. Dewey's concrete view of the child as citizen and productive force had the virtue of responding to the ideals and realities of American society. It was at the same time both a grandiose belief in the equality of all American citizens and a deliberate simplification of the social and ethnic realities of American childhood.

Efficiency, technology, optimism, and the need for visible and prompt results seem to characterize American approaches to the nature of the child. Freud's conceptualization of the child was neither optimistic, nor particularly useful in the attainment of immediate practical results in education. Therefore his grim view of human nature found only a limited initial response in America. The dark, inescapable, irrational Freudian struggles of childhood, clothed in the language of Greek mythology, did not seem

particular relevant to most Americans. Freudian ideas were admitted only after they became integrated into the ego psychology of Anna Freud and Erik H. Erikson and after the English nursery school movement had made them acceptable educational fare.

The arrival in America of exiled European psychoanalysts shortly before World War II contributed to the dissemination of neo-Freudian ideas. Erikson was among these exiles. His optimistic version of the resolution of the inevitable developmental crises of childhood and his greater emphasis on the importance of environment and social interactions made the new psychoanalytic image of the child part of the mainstream of contemporary educational theory.

Finally, Piaget signaled the most recent massive European influence on the American conceptualization of the young child. His contribution was so novel and touched on issues that were so original that it has taken decades to be even partially assimilated into educational practice. Like the children in Froebel's Education of Man, the Piagetian child attained her understanding of reality through playing with the pebbles and straws of the real world, but the Froebelian unfolding of innate potentialities was replaced in Piaget with the child's active inner construction of logical categories. And, as in Montessori,

the child, alone and only indirectly supported by the adult, was considered to be in charge of his own cognitive development.

Learning and education became secondary in the Piagetian model while cognition was postulated as the central topic. Knowing and understanding are the all-encompassing endeavors of the young child. Social, emotional, and moral development is subsumed in the idea of cognitive development. In his later work, Piaget described infants and young children as solitary researchers and scientists, painstakingly testing and retesting their hypotheses and constantly revising their conclusions about the nature and function of reality.

As a consequence of the cognitive revolution sparked by Piagetian ideas, contemporary developmental psychology is now rediscovering the work of the American psychologist and sociologist J. M. Baldwin and the research of the Soviet cognitive psychologists of the late 1920s, especially L. S. Vygotsky and A. R. Luria. It is too soon to say what the effect of this belated influence will be, but its development should be followed closely by early childhood educators. These psychologists postulated a notion of child development as a social process in which social history determined individual development. In view of the numerous contemporary recommendations that Americans should revise their staunch individualistic faith and adapt it to the

realities of modern society, the ideas of Baldwin and the Soviet psychologists may offer a productive point of departure.

B. Conclusions

Very little continuity and cross-fertilization between and among doctrines have existed in the theoretical constructs of the last century. Most of the theoretical models of the child have produced a more or less pure practical application, either as an educational or as a childrearing practice. However, practical interpretations of theoretical principles have also tended to be short-lived. Montessori is probably the only model which has survived in almost pristine form to this day.

During the 1960s, the diversity of viewpoints about the child was translated into programs that attempted the relatively pure implementation of consistent theoretical principles. Mostly under the auspices of the federal government, educational models were designed, implemented, and carefully evaluated. While they purposively adopted diverse educational philosophies, all had two elements in common: they were primarily designed for poor and mostly minority children conceptualized as disadvantaged and cognitively deprived, and, in addition, the programs shared the same goal of preparing children for success in their future academic pursuits by achieving a significant increase

in the average IQ scores of the group. In spite of these elements in common, several distinct educational models evolved.

One of the most criticized and also the purest version of a theoretical statement was the curriculum designed in 1966 by C. Bereiter and S. Engelman. They produced a behavioristic model of drill and reinforcement under the name of DISTAR in order to teach language, reading, and mathematics to low income prekindergarten and kindergarten children (Braun & Edwards, 1972). The picture of the child as a passive recipient of information and the preschool as a place of preparation for "what was in store for the children" (Parker, 1972, p.340) implied by this program was often criticized in the literature. The authors of this instructional model justified it, however, as an effective way of remediating the precisely defined shortcomings of the low income child. Instruction was direct, intensive, verbal, and teacher-initiated; children were expected to respond immediately, often in unison, and received verbal or tangible rewards for prompt and correct responses. The program was successful in achieving the goal it set out to achieve. However, later versions expanded the objectives and departed from the strictly behavioristic method used in the original.

A different approach to intellectual enhancement was operative in Glen Nimnicht's New Nursery School model. He

believed that the development of a positive self-image was a fundamental aspect of cognitive ability. Consequently, Nimnicht designed a responsive educational system with the emphasis placed upon autotelic (self-rewarding) activities which had both a didactic and an ego-building function. This model has been often compared to the Montessori program in the freedom allowed each child, the respect paid to the individual construction of knowledge, and in the importance attached to sensory and perceptual training. In addition, Nimnicht's curriculum fostered language development, concept formation, and social skills.

Piagetian principles inspired many structured curricular designs not without causing a lively polemic among designers about the theoretical correctness of one against the other, especially between C. Kamii and C. Lavatelli (Evans, 1975). The best known and most enduring of the Piagetian models was D. Weikart's High/Scope Cognitively Oriented curriculum. This design considered children as active participants in their own learning and offered rich and varied experiences as indispensable for full development. It incorporated, in addition to the Piagetian principles, opportunities for socio-dramatic play in order to develop the socio-emotional aspects of the child which were relatively neglected in Piaget's theory. Freedom within structure, interesting materials, child initiated activities and a respect for the creativity and initiative of the

teacher were characteristics of this curriculum in sharp contrast to DISTAR's scripted teaching and repetitive drill.

Interestingly enough, Piagetian curricula had many materials and activities in common with the traditional nursery school. Even Kamii, the foremost interpreter of Piagetian orthodoxy for early childhood educators, stated that "the more [she] studied Piaget's theory, the more [she] came to respect the intuitive wisdom of the traditional nursery school" (Parker, 1972, p.119). When Weikart set out to test the effectiveness of his Piagetian model versus the behavioristic Bereiter model, he included a traditional nursery school as the control group. To his great surprise, the children in this apparently theoretically naive school with no explicit academic or cognitive goals scored as well as the children attending the carefully designed models.

This changed Weikart's assumption that a program needed to be based on a "specific, theoretically sound curriculum" (Parker, 1972, p.211). He affirmed that "the search for a single technique or theory with specific activities, language, training, equipment, and experiences is felt to be fruitless" (p.211). Weikart felt that the issue was more complex and concluded that the success of a program depended on the teachers, their perception of the children, and their deep personal commitment to the program.

The curricular designs briefly described above were only partially successful in maintaining their theoretical

purity. All incorporated elements from the traditional nursery school, either in the original version, as in Weikart's case, or in later revisions as exemplified by the later editions of the DISTAR and the Kamii-DeVries curricula. The Bank Street model, on the other hand, acknowledged from the start its integrative approach to theoretical formulations. Biber, the main force behind the developmental-interaction viewpoint, understood intuitively the complexity involved in the understanding of the nature of children, and, consequently, the need for several ideological contributions in order to construct a metatheory of the child (Biber, 1984).

The development of the Bank Street model spanned six decades of close contact with the major events in childhood education at New York's Bank Street College. This model has its roots in the ideology of John Dewey and the Progressives. It incorporated the cognitive psychology of Piaget, the ideas of Freud, and the developmental accounts of ego processes by Erikson. Biber considered that "children are basically curious and impelled to make an impact on their environment [and] that they are equipped with autonomous ego functioning independent of instinctual drives" (1984, p.290). Although this theoretical integration was derived from practice at first, rather than the other way around, Biber recognized later that the principles adopted belonged to the same "family of theories" and were, there-

fore, not only compatible and "deepening," but also necessary "to avoid oversimplification of multiple, complex processes" (Biber, 1984, p.306).

The Bank Street model was designed not only for the "whole child" but for all children. It was used with low- as well as middle-income children with no substantial changes in design. This democratic attitude reveals the survival of the best of the Progressive educational tradition.

What are the theoretical elements adopted by the nursery school that proved to be so enduring? Although programs vary widely in their philosophical emphases, a visit to any modern American day care center will reveal almost the complete history of early childhood education. Froebelian influences, for example, survive in many details of today's early childhood classroom: the child-size furniture, the unit blocks, a derivation of the Froebelian Gifts, the beads for stringing, are a few examples. The plants on the windowsill and the garden corner in the backyard, the walks to the neighborhood park are all reminders of Froebel's insistence that children needed the close communion with nature in their daily lives. Many of today's fingerplays and songs come directly or indirectly from Froebel's Mother Play. The daily practice of meeting in a circle persists in almost every classroom although its

symbolic significance has been replaced by a socializing or instructional function.

Like the English nursery school, today's children's center has also adopted many of the Montessori materials but its use by the children is free and unregulated. Geometric insets, seriation materials, sandpaper letters, and counting beads are commonly found in every center today. The open design of the classroom and the accessibility of the materials, the emphasis on individual work, the expectation of completion, the freedom to choose an activity, the responsibility for attending to one's own needs, all reflect the Montessorian influence.

The contribution of ego-psychology can be seen in the area of dramatic play and the diagnostic and therapeutic value attached to the activities in this area. The way teachers deal with the emotional aspects of the child, especially her conflicts with parents and other adults, often reflects a Freudian awareness of the power and importance of feelings in the lives of young children. At the same time, children's affective needs are often conceptualized in Eriksonian terms and teachers devise activities and situations in order to nurture the emerging sense of self.

The contemporary period of free outdoor play has its origin in the Hallian ideas about natural development and the importance of gross motor development in the early

years, although few teachers today would be aware of the fact that during this period the child is theoretically free to enact her phyletic and anthropological past. The still current idea that children will outgrow almost every problem belongs also to this strand of naturalistic pedagogy.

Practices derived from experimental psychology were not part of the traditional nursery school but they have found their way into many of today's programs. Thorndike's belief in the ability to measure and evaluate virtually all areas of children's behavior is part of current practice, in spite of the reluctance of many early childhood educators. IQ tests, achievement measures, or other evaluation instruments are commonly used by parents and teachers to make decisions that affect the child. More pervasive even than the mental measurement tradition has been the legacy of behaviorism. Although it is safe to say that parents and educators do not generally describe children as passive products of environmental stimuli, behavioristic techniques of shaping and reinforcing have been found effective and, therefore, have been often adopted without much hesitation.

Behavioristic techniques are frequently used in the management of discipline problems among young children. The commonly repeated admonition to novice teachers to "catch them when they are good" applies Skinner's findings about the superior reinforcing value of rewards as opposed to punishments. Examples of conditioning in the early child-

hood classroom can, unfortunately, be multiplied. This technique is also applied to affective situations such as separation, aggression, or shyness.

Behaviorism surfaces in the realm of intellectual development in those classrooms where the "back to basics" ideology interprets cognition as early academic learning. Learning prescribed by demands which do not originate from within the child will require extrinsic reinforcement. In this setting, learning is equated to conditioning and its goals are limited to the inculcation of specific skills.

Piagetian research, on the other hand, has contributed to the understanding of the unique nature of the young child's intellectual development. Educators have learned to plan appropriate curricular activities which are intrinsically satisfying while they are cognitively stimulating. Therefore, an integrated early childhood program will reject the behavioristic approach, if not completely, at least in the area of cognition. Most teachers today have assimilated several important Piagetian lessons: children have their own perspective on the world, they need to interact physically with their environment, they learn best from moderately novel stimuli, and they learn better through their own discovery than through verbal or group instruction (McCarthy & Houston, 1980).

New areas of concern have been created by a recent awareness of both the interrelatedness of all people and the

fragility of the future of this world. Activities for children to promote multicultural understanding in a national and international dimension and the various peace curricula, although specifically new, can be traced back to the recurrent idea of the child as the redeemer of society.

The short visit to today's practice of the education of young children has revealed its intuitive assimilation of various theoretical images of the child into a satisfying and enriching daily experience. The review of programs more closely tied to specific theories has shown the lack of consensus about the relative value of these theories. In conclusion, it can be stated that there does not exist today a unitary and powerful vision of childhood which proves to be as compelling and complex as those formulated by Froebel, Freud, or Piaget.

The present theoretical vacuum in developmental psychology has contributed to the partitioning of content and the creation of numerous separate areas of empirical inquiry in this discipline. At the same time, many developmental psychologists are searching for a new common theoretical and methodological ground for the formulation of a new understanding of the child. It has been pointed out earlier that not only all former assumptions about children are being reexamined but also that the field of developmental

psychology itself is in the process of reconstruction (Kessel & Siegel, 1983).

The child as a physical and biological entity and the regularities and universal properties of growth as topics of developmental psychology are being replaced by the idea of childhood as a social and historical phenomenon. Development is seen as a flowering of the child manifested in "the child's growing usage of the diverse contexts of human activity provided for that child" (White, 1983b). The acceptance of a cultural embeddedness of both the child and the scientific discipline that studies children will make the formulation of a unitary concept impossible because such a definition requires certainty and immutability. Since a cultural understanding is relative and ever changing, it is likely that numerous images of children will be formulated which, while relinquishing all claims of certainty, will contribute to a better understanding of childhood.

C. Recommendations

We have seen that there is no simple way of defining the child or of finding one theoretical formulation that will fully reflect today's perception of the child. We have become aware of the complexities involved in ascertaining the nature of the child because we have discovered the intricate historical webs of relationships that determine

each individual. We have also become aware that the observer is as much a part, actively and passively, of that web.

The examination of the diverse visions of childhood should enrich our own notion of what children are but we should approach these historical studies with the same attitude with which we study other constructions of the human spirit. Theories about the child are, like all formulations about human nature, not exact statements but rather myths that deepen understanding. The crucial point should be not how accurate a theory is but how vivid and enriching a contribution it makes to our own view of childhood.

The education of children is as much a philosophical, ethical, and political activity as it is a pedagogic undertaking. The re-emerging understanding that social and cultural tools not only influence but determine human development, based on American and Soviet studies of the early 20th century, places enormous responsibilities on the adults in any culture but especially on American educators who have tended to underestimate the importance of their function.

It is our responsibility, then, to insure that children will grow up human. In order to achieve this, children need to be guided back to the mainstream of social and cultural life and share in the high achievements of

their culture. The goal for their intellectual development will be enrichment rather than acceleration. In a sense, the children's center has to become again "a paradise of childhood." In a heightened and idealized way it has to reflect the best society can offer to the new generation. More than ever, in this threatening world, children are our last chance.

Adults have to be uncompromising in their efforts to convey the values of cooperation, compassion, and peace through a humanistic education. From Froebel, Montessori and Piaget we have learned to trust the child; Vygotsky demonstrated that children need adults to guide them to the high achievements of culture in order to become fully human. Reading Skinner we have realized that as effective as his schedules of reinforcement may be in the teaching of skills or the manipulation of emotions, there is one thing that cannot be conditioned and that is the dignity of full humanity.

The diverse efforts to meliorate the plight of poor children have shown, among other things, the inegalitarian nature of our society. Our efforts to guide children in the understanding of the positive values of human achievement will be artificial in isolation. What children learn is shaped by much larger forces. Therefore, educators have to confront again the issues of social reform and the moral

reawakening of society, an exhortation already expressed seventy years ago by Jane Addams.

Psychological research and educational practice have to cooperate in the search for a greater understanding of the inner world of the child and the social interdependence of human development. Once we assimilate the lessons of the past, we have to accommodate them to the Vygotskian realization that a child is not born a Robinson Crusoe on a desert island, but immediately enters the existing social world, dealing every second of life with objects created by social history and that this alone makes the child a human being. Meanwhile, the quality of the social world we offer our children is our responsibility.

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APPENDIX

<u>Definitions of the nature of the child: Relative theoretical emphases</u>	Development as an inner phenomenon	Recapitulationism	Learning/Cognition	Affectivity	Social redemption	Socio-cultural embeddedness	Individualism	Heredity	Environment	Child as the object of quantitative science	Period of major influence
Froebel	X	X	X		X	X					1870s to 1910s
Hall/Gesell	X	X		X	X		X	X		X	1880s cont.
Philanthropists							X	X		X	1890s to 1920s
Social reformers	X			X	X	X			X		1890s to 1920s
James	X			X			X		X		1890s to 1910s
Thorndike			X				X	X		X	1900s cont.
Dewey	X	X	X		X	X			X		1900s cont.
Montessori	X	X	X		X		X		X		1910s; 1950s cont.
Freud	X	X		X			X				1910s to 1950s
Watson				X			X		X	X	1920s to 1950s
Skinner			X		X		X		X	X	1950s to 1970s
Erikson	X			X		X			X		1950s cont.
The planners of the War on Poverty			X		X		X		X	X	1960s and 1970s
Piaget	X	X	X				X		X		1960s to 1980s
Baldwin	X	X	X			X			X		redisc 1980s
Vygotsky/Luria	X		X			X			X		redisc 1980s